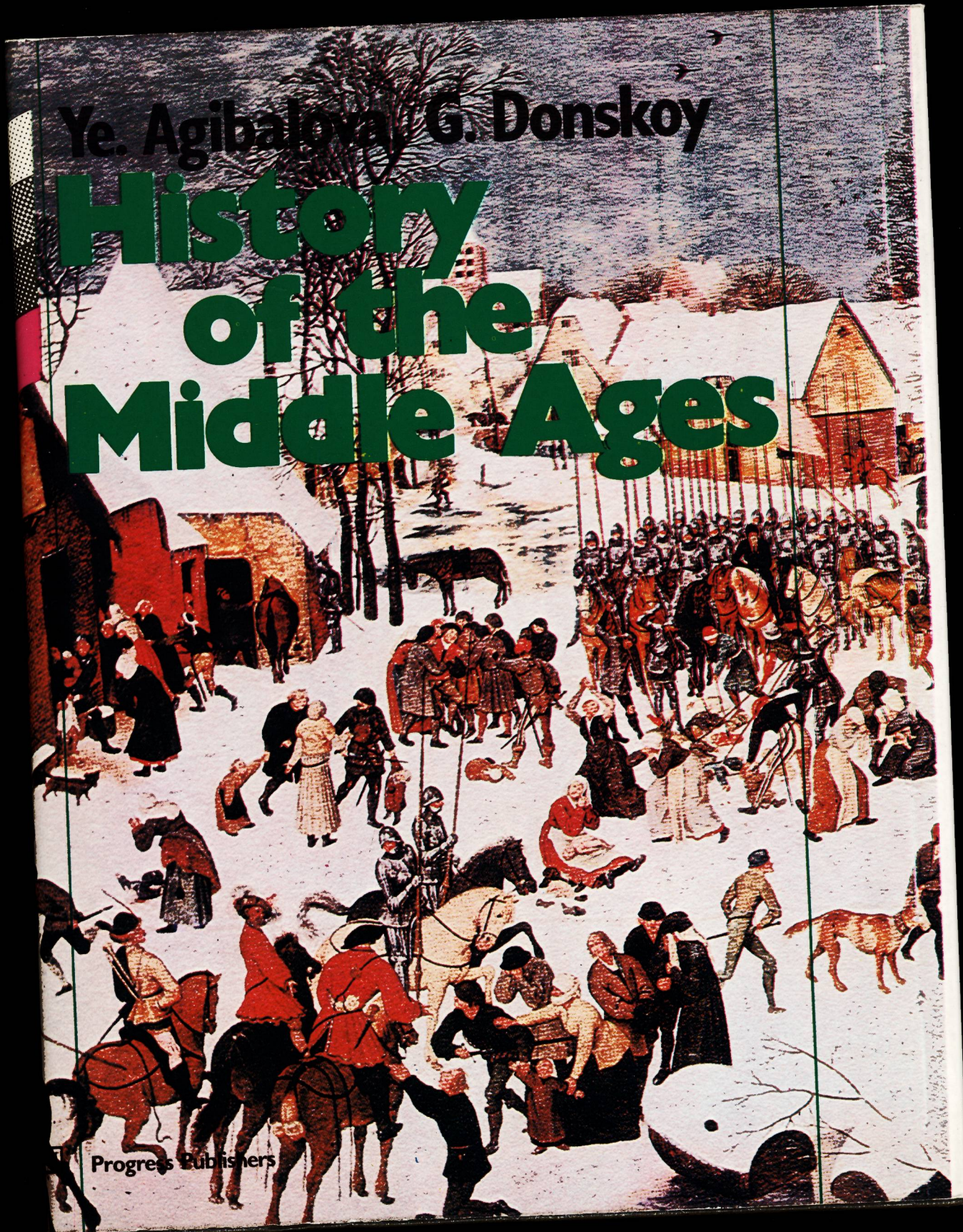


Ye. Agibalova, G. Donskoy

History of the Middle Ages



Progress Publishers

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Translated from the Russian by *Natalia Belskaya*

Edited by *Patricia Beriozkin*

Е. В. Агибалова, Г. М. Донской

ИСТОРИЯ СРЕДНИХ ВЕКОВ

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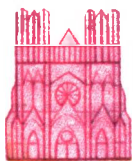
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Introduction

WHAT IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The eventful and stormy 5th century was drawing to a close. In 476 A.D., crippled by slave and coloni's uprisings, the Western Roman Empire collapsed under the devastating blows of the barbarians. Slavery, which had obstructed economic and cultural progress, had come to an end.

Thus ended the history of Antiquity and began *the history of the Middle Ages*—a period that covers the twelve centuries between Antiquity and Renaissance, whose onset marked the beginning of the New Time. Looking at the Table of Historical Time you will see the place occupied by the Middle Ages in the history of mankind.

From the history of Antiquity, you have learned how people lived under the primitive communal system and the slave-owning system. Throughout the Middle Ages, most peoples lived under *the feudal system*. This book will trace the emergence of feudalism and study its main characteristics and the reasons for its decline towards the close of the period.

Peoples entered the stage of feudal development at differ-

The place of the Middle Ages in the history of mankind

Antiquity							The Middle Ages														Second half of the 17th-19th cent.		After 1917																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														

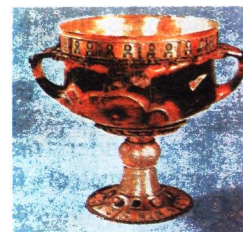
ent times. For instance, in Western Europe the feudal system was established in the late 5th century, and in other regions—somewhat earlier or later. Neither was the length of the feudal stage of development the same with different peoples.

You will learn how the working people lived at that time and how valiantly they fought for freedom and a better life. The history of the Middle Ages will tell you about leaders of popular uprisings and heroes of liberation wars, about adventurous travellers who made long voyages to distant shores, about the ideas and deeds of distinguished scholars, and the work of great men in the arts which mankind still appreciates.

Many museums of the world have material artefacts—tools which were used by peasants and craftsmen in the Middle Ages, as well as weapons, coins, furniture and tableware.

As the history of the Middle Ages is nearer the present than the history of Antiquity, the world has preserved many of its “traces”. Old cities still retain entire blocks of houses which once belonged to medieval craftsmen and merchants; the walls and towers of fortresses, and majestic cathedrals still stand.

But *material historical sources* cannot supply all the details of people’s life. Scholars have numerous *written historical sources* on the history of the Middle Ages. These are kept in special repositories of documents called *archives*. Whenever someone gave a gift, bequeathed or bought land or valuable objects, these transactions were documented. Such documents also include descriptions of estates and reports of estate managers. A special group of documents consists of written



Handcrafted medieval precious bowl



Medieval chronicler.
Miniature from a medieval manuscript

laws, edicts of rulers, and court decisions.

Many historical works and chronicles have come down to us from the Middle Ages. In these, events were described in the sequence in which they actually happened. The authors of some *historical works* tried to unite events into categories and explain them. We also know many medieval works of fiction and scholarly works. Before the printing press was invented in the mid-15th century, all documents were written by hand.

Works of art—book illustrations, woven pictures on carpets, paintings and sculptures in cathedrals—can also tell a great deal about people's lives. Songs, fairy-tales and legends convey people's ideas of the world. Works of architecture also reveal to the scholars the thoughts and feelings of medieval people.

Scholars draw on various sources for facts about the life of people in the Middle Ages and compare them in order to understand how accurately these represent everyday life at certain periods, and then make conclusions and explain individual events and whole historical periods.



Medieval copper coin

?

1. What are the sources of our knowledge about the history of the Middle Ages? 2. What historical sources are most useful to scholars stu-

dying a war or an uprising? What sources can they use when examining the economy or the situation of different classes?



Walls and towers of Tallinn

PART ONE

Establishment of the Feudal System



CHAPTER 1

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE 5th-11th CENTURIES

From the late 4th century, the Western Roman Empire was overrun by Germanic tribes. While the Greeks and Romans lived under the slave-owning system, the Germans still retained the primitive communal system. In the first centuries A.D. this system began to rapidly disintegrate. The feudal system was gradually being established on the conquered territories.

§ 1. The Emergence and Growth of Inequality among the Germans. German Conquests in the 5th Century

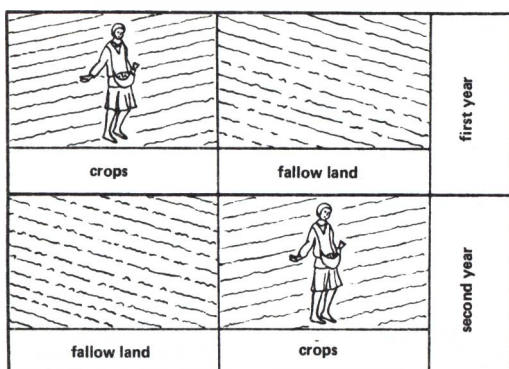
1. Occupations of the Germans. In Antiquity, the Germanic tribes inhabited the territory stretching from the Rhine to the Elbe.

By the beginning of the first century A.D., the Germans lived in clan communities with clans uniting into tribes. Settlement was by clan. In the woods and in marshy areas, the members of a clan built log huts and covered them with straw. The settlements were protected from enemies by moats and earth walls. The land around the settlement belonged to the clan as a whole.

The Germans bred cattle and poultry, hunted and fished. But their chief occupation was cultivating land. Having cleared a plot for a field, they worked the soil until it became impoverished after two or three years, then cleared a new field.

Besides hoes, they frequently used light ploughs pulled by oxen, and wooden harrows. During their conquests, the Germans saw that the Romans were using *two-field rotation of crops*, and borrowed that system. The ploughable land was divided in two fields: one was worked and the other lay fallow, or "rested". There was an annual rotation of the two fields. *The transition to the two-field system resulted in higher labour productivity in agriculture.*

2. Transition from Clan Communities to Neighbour Communities. Having learned better ways to cultivate the land,



Two-field rotation of crops



Clothing worn by the Germans: a hat, a hood, a belt, a cloak buckle, footwear

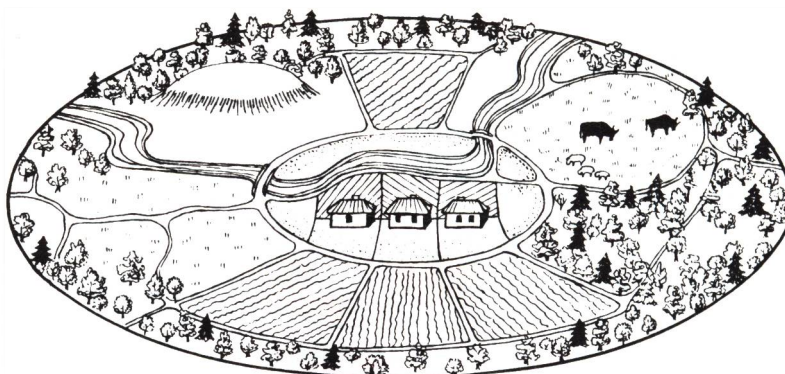
the Germans no longer needed all members of a clan to till the land together. Ploughable land was divided into plots and distributed among individual families. During extended military campaigns some Germans, left behind their clans, settled down with people from other clans. Thus, village populations came to include not only relatives but just neighbours as well. *In the 5th-6th centuries, clan communities were gradually substituted by neighbour communities.*

A Germanic settlement. Modern painting



The land was still considered the property of the community as a whole. But the elders allotted to each family its own share of the ploughable land, a so-called *ploughstrip*. The families used their own tools to till it, and the harvest was their property. After the harvest had been taken in, the fields were used as a communal pasture for the cattle of all the villagers. So all the members of the community began to work in the fields and finished this work at the same time, and grew the same crops.

How did the neighbour community differ from the clan community (who comprised these communities, and how was the land used in them)?



A neighbour community. Each family has a yard and a kitchen garden. The arable land is divided into patches of different quality. So that all community members would have equal farming conditions, each is given strips on a number of patches; the strips make up the community member's land allotment. This kind of land distribution is called strip farming.

There was communal use of forests, meadows, pastures, and rivers. Each member of the commune could hunt, fell trees, graze his cattle, and fish in rivers and lakes.

With the appearance of peasant communities, inequality developed among the Germans.

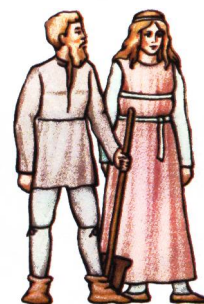
3. *Increasing Inequality among the Germans.* The tribes were governed by people's assemblies. On a moonlit night, armed men were convened by the elders to meet at a clearing in the forest. The assembly decided the most important matters: declared war and concluded peace, elected leaders, and settled disputes between members of the community. Decisions were based on ancient custom passed on by oral tradition.

In the first centuries A.D., the *nobility*—"the first people of the tribe"—came to be distinguished among the Germans. Those were clan elders and people who were military leaders during times of war. A custom gradually developed whereby the leaders were always elected from the same families. Members of the nobility had more cattle than ordinary members of the tribe and better land plots. They also appropriated the lion's share of the spoils of war. Only members of the nobility could address the general assemblies; the ordinary members of the tribe approved their proposals by rattling their weapons or rejected them by loud shouts.

In wartime, all men capable of taking up arms became warriors. The leaders recruited the warriors for permanent *armed retinues*. The leader would feed the troops at his table, arm them and provide them with horses; the warriors were obliged to carry out the orders of the leader.

The Germans' invasions into the Roman Empire increased inequality among them. The nobility came to live mostly on the war booty and ceased to work their land. The land of the no-

German men's and women's clothes



Who was considered "the nobility"? What were the features distinguishing the nobles?



Military leader with retinue. *Modern painting.*

bility was tilled by prisoners who had been made slaves, but their number was not great. A slave was given a rather small plot of land which he tilled for himself. This plot fed him and his family, and he turned part of the grain and cattle he had raised over to his master.

4. *The Germans Spread Throughout the Empire.* From forays into the Empire, the Germans passed on to conquests. Whole tribes left long-occupied places and embarked on campaigns against distant lands. By the late 5th century, the Germans had spread throughout the territory of the Western Roman Empire as follows: *the Vandals* settled in North Africa, *the Visigoths* (West Goths)—in Spain, *the Ostrogoths* (East Goths)—in Italy, *the Franks*—in Gaul, and *the Angles* and *Saxons* in Britain.

The embattled Western Roman Empire was no match for the onslaught of the barbarians. Its population, brutally oppressed and staggering under heavy taxes, offered next to no resistance to the Germans. Slaves, coloni and the free poor sided with the conquerors, joined their units, and opened city gates for them.

Many cities lay in ruins; others were on the decline. Many crafts were forgotten for centuries. Ports and roads were deserted, trade was at a standstill.

The German invasions destroyed the enfeebled slave-owning system in Western Europe. After the conquest, free community peasants accounted for most of the population.

What is exploitation, and why did it emerge?

? 1. What were the improvements in land cultivation that took place in the first centuries A.D.? What was their impact? How was the inequality

between the nobility and the ordinary members of the commune exhibited? Why did it intensify in the 5th century? 2. On the map, find the

territories inhabited by the Germans.
3. What facts point to the decomposition of the primitive communal

system with the Germans towards the end of the 5th century? What clan structures were retained by them?

§ 2. The Formation of the Frankish State

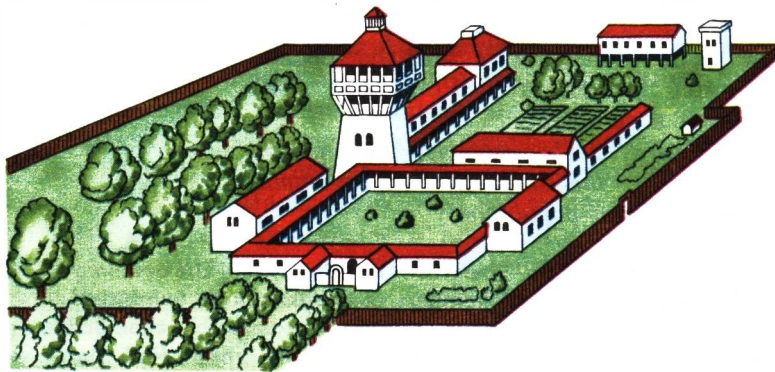
(Map No. 1)

1. *The Franks Conquer Gaul.* Before the migrations, the Franks, a group of Germanic tribes, lived in the lower reaches of the Rhine. Each tribe had a military leader. Late in the 5th century, the most prominent among the leaders was *Clovis*, a cunning, calculating and cruel man.

The Frankish nobility had long been attracted by the fertile plains of neighbouring Gaul, which they longed to capture for its land, cattle, expensive weapons and battle horses. Entering into an alliance with other Frankish leaders, Clovis led the Franks in a campaign against Gaul. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Gaul was ruled by a former Roman vice-regent, who declared himself an independent ruler.

In 486, at the town of *Soissons*, the Franks routed the Roman troops in a tough battle and conquered part of Gaul. Later, they annexed the south of the country. The Franks conquered many tribes to the east of the Rhine.

2. *The Franks Divide the Captured Lands.* As other Germanic peoples, the Franks were in the process of passing from the family to the neighbour community; inequality among them was growing. In the conquered country, the Franks distributed some of the Roman slave-owners' land and cleared and ploughed part of the uncultivated land.



Estate of a Frankish king, 7th-8th centuries. *Reconstruction.* The wooden buildings are fenced in. In the foreground is a spacious yard surrounded by a gallery. Adjacent to it are living quarters. On the left is a watch-tower. In the background are kitchen gardens and out-buildings.

The rank-and-file members of the communities received small family plots, while Clovis seized enormous territories that used to belong to the Roman Emperor. To strengthen his power, he distributed large land plots to his warriors and associates. Frankish noblemen captured many treasures and took possession of large land plots; they thus became *big landowners*.

Some of the Roman slave-owners hastened to acknowledge the rule of Clovis and thus managed to keep their lands. They helped Clovis to rule the conquered country and gradually merged with the Frankish nobility.

The land belonging to the nobility became their *private property*. Big landowners disposed of the land as they wished: it could be inherited, sold, given as a gift or bartered. The fields of the nobility were worked by slaves and coloni, a relic of Roman times.

With the emergence of private ownership of land, classes—large groups of people with one of them exploiting the other—began to appear.

3. *Clovis Becomes King of the Franks.* The Frankish state, a special force for the *oppression of the downtrodden*, emerged around the year 500. Assisted by the state, big landowners were able to control the freemen (ordinary members of the communities), slaves and coloni, as well as the local population of Gaul. For this reason, the nobility sought to consolidate the power of Clovis, the strongest among the military leaders.

By craft and treachery, he destroyed the other military leaders who had helped him conquer Gaul and became the sole ruler of the large country.

He became a *king*—the ruler of all the Franks. As distinct from a military leader, a king's children succeeded to the throne after his death.

4. *Changes in the Administration of the Country.* Having conquered Gaul, Clovis no longer convened the assembly. He made all important decisions alone or consulted members of the nobility. The rest of the Franks were informed about the King's decisions at troop reviews held each spring.

The Frankish armed force still consisted of ordinary community members turned warriors. But its core was now the King's armed retinue. Clovis' service was joined by great number of warriors who had served other leaders, now dead, and he used his armed retinue to control the population of Gaul and members of the Frank communities.



Frankish warrior. Body protection includes a long leather tunic and a wither-and-leather shield. In battle, the warriors threw spears and battle axes, used swords in close combat.

From among people faithful to him, Clovis appointed rulers to each region of the large country. These rulers, *counts*, collected the taxes and commanded armed units.

In olden days, disputes among relatives and the guilt of those accused of crimes were decided at people's assemblies. Now, the King was the supreme judge. Locally, justice was administered by counts and Frankish noblemen.

Big landowners sought to introduce severe punishment for those who encroached on their lands or their riches. On order of the King, the Franks' old customs and the King's orders were put down in writing and formed the first *law code*. The laws set heavy fines for theft of slaves or cattle and for setting fire to barns and stockyards. The laws protected private property and legalised the inequality among the Franks.

With the emergence of classes, the Frankish state was formed. It protected the lives and property of big landowners and helped them subjugate the people.

5. *The Alliance of the King and the Church.* After the conquest of Gaul, the Franks adopted Christianity.

The Christian religion instilled submissiveness and patience in the people and urged the latter to work hard for their masters. For this reason, the King and his retinue converted to Christianity, and then forced all the Franks to do the same.

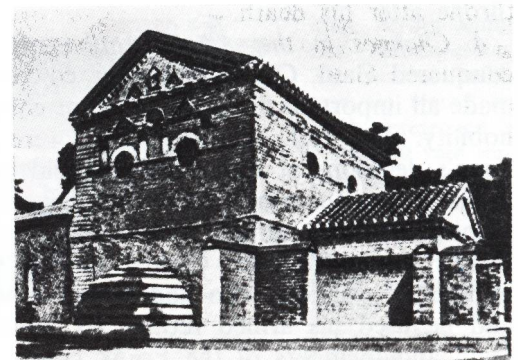
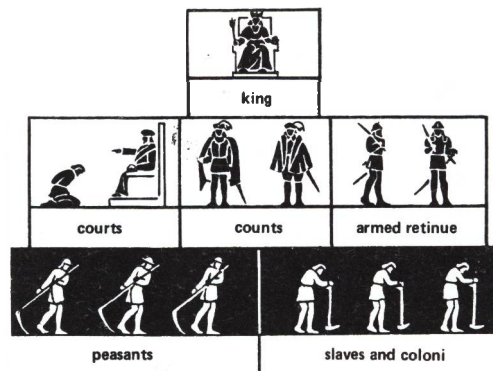
The church helped consolidate Clovis's power. It was ready to acquit him of serious crimes and said that God put King Clovis's enemies into his hands. In return, Clovis protected the church's riches and generously presented the clergy with more land.



Page from a Frankish law code. This 8th-century manuscript is in Latin

The Frankish state in the 6th century

Church in Poitiers, 7th century



? 1. What was the difference between private ownership of land and communal ownership? How did big land-owners appear among the Franks? 2. What was the difference between ruling a tribe and ruling a state? What was the main purpose of the Frankish state? 3. Why was the alliance of the King and the Christian Church to the advantage of both? Recall how the Christian religion

protected the interests of slave-owners in the last centuries of the existence of the Roman Empire. 4. Arrange the following in logical sequence: (a) emergence of inequality; (b) transition from the family community to the neighbour community; (c) emergence of classes; (d) improvements in agriculture; (e) formation of the state; (f) privatisation of land. Give your reasons.

§ 3. The Growth of Large Landed Estates and the Enserfment of Peasants

1. *How the Nobility Captured the Freeman's Lands.* At the time of the conquest of Gaul, the Franks were free members of communities. But a few centuries later, the majority of peasants found themselves in bondage. How and why did this happen?

From the late 6th century, family plots became the private property of community members. This concluded the transition from the family community to the neighbour community. The peasants were now free to do as they wished with their plots. This made capturing peasant lands easier for the Frankish nobility.

Emulating the King, Franks from among the nobility recruited armed retainers and gave the warriors land plots for their service. To have more land to distribute among the warriors, the nobility appropriated the free peasants' plots in various ways. This was made easier by the fact that in the late 6th century family plots had become the peasants' private property.

Many old documents found in archives reveal how Frankish peasants were deprived of land. Quite often, Frankish noblemen and their warriors attacked villages and captured the peasants' plots by force.

The nobility had many other means of increasing their possessions. As a contemporary document stated, they were always looking for grounds to convict a peasant, or make him go to war, and did this until the ruined peasant was forced to sell his property or grant it to them. Suffering

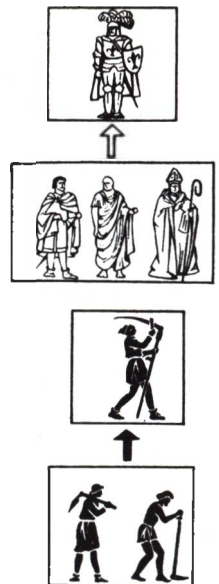
under the oppression of strong neighbours—counts and warriors—the peasants were obliged to apply to one of these for “protection”. But such “protection” cost the peasant a great deal—his land passed into the possession of his “patron”.

Some of the peasants in communities also increased their wealth, but the majority grew poorer and poorer and were finally ruined. Their position was made worse by frequent crop failures and wars. Almost every year, they were torn away from agricultural work to serve in the army at their own expense. The enemies that attacked them often burnt down villages, trampled down crops, and drove away cattle.

Rich peasants used to their own advantage the difficulties facing other community members. An impoverished peasant was forced to borrow cattle, seeds and food from a rich one, and then had to pay the debt by working the latter's plot. If the poor peasant was unable to pay his debt in time, he had to deed his land over to his rich neighbour. In this way, a handful of peasants grew into large landowners.

2. *Peasants Are Losing Their Freedom.* Peasants who had lost their land were dependent on rich landowners. As a rule, the peasant continued to work his former plot, but to be allowed to use it, he had to give part of the produce to his master and work in his field.

Not all *dependent peasants* were in the same position. Some lost their land but retained their personal freedom and were thus in land bondage. Others lost not only their land but their personal freedom as well, which means both land bondage and *personal bondage*. They were forbidden to leave their village. They had, as it were, to serve the land, and for that reason were called *serfs*. The children



Which sections of the population formed the class of the feudal lords and the class of dependent peasants?



Peasants assault a landowner. *Miniature*

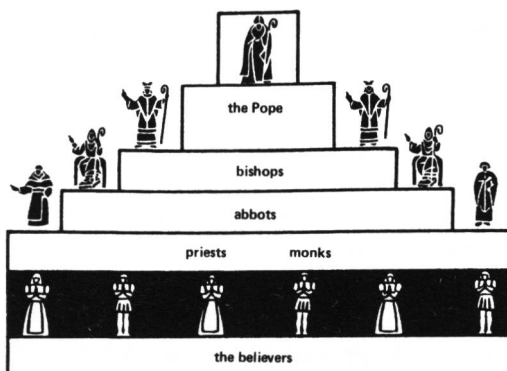
and grandchildren of these peasants were also in personal bondage to the owner of the land.

Frankish kings helped the nobility to make serfs out of free peasants. One of the royal edicts stated that each free man had to choose himself a master.

The peasants staunchly resisted enslavement. They had long lived in communities and were used to settling all problems together. It was easier for them than for the slaves to come to agreement, and there was greater unity in their struggle than in the struggle of slaves. Often, they refused to work for the masters, set fire to the latter's houses and barns. Individual peasants and whole villages fled from their native parts and settled in unoccupied lands. The bravest gathered in the woods and defended their land and freedom with arms. But the nobility was stronger. Big landowners had well-armed troops and were supported by the King and the church.

3. *The Growth of Church Possessions.* This was a time of unrest. Many people who had lost their families or property tried to find consolation in religion. Some who renounced secular life and devoted their lives to prayer, were called *monks*. As a rule, monks lived in groups separately from other people. Their settlements—*monasteries* and *convents*—were surrounded by high walls. Inside were dwellings, refectories, churches and barns. Upon entering a monastery, a monk made a vow not to have a family, to live in poverty and show unquestioning obedience to his superior, the *abbot*.

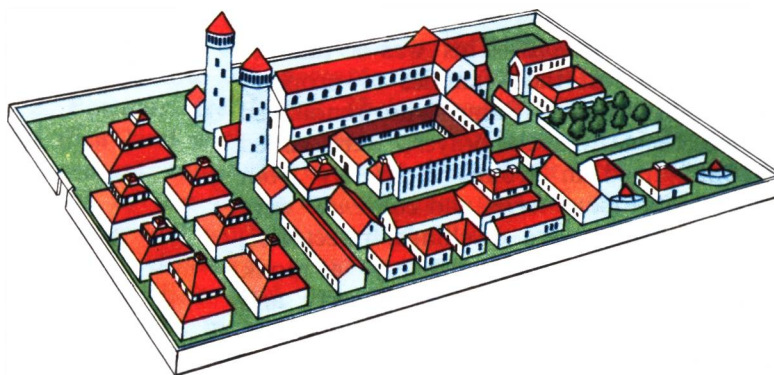
The Christian Church was a powerful organisation. Nearly every village had a priest. In large districts, the administration of church affairs was carried out by *bishops* or *archbishops*. In Western Europe, the head of the whole Christian



Structure of the
Christian Church

Church was the Pope, who sat in Rome. All the people in the service of the church formed a separate section of the population—the *clergy*.

At that time, people believed that the clergy with their prayers could save them from illness and crop failures. Thousands of simple peasants and artisans gave their last money and possessions to the church. A contemporary document states that the clergy increased their riches through attracting the faithful by the bliss of the Kingdom of Heaven and scaring them with the eternal tortures of Hell, and deprived the ignorant simpletons of their possessions. Kings and the nobility gave land and valuables to bishops and monasteries. Having brought many people to ruin, they were afraid of God's wrath and hoped that the priests with their prayers would get them absolution.



Model of the Saint Gall Monastery (9th century). Among the structures on its territory are an inn, a school for training monks, the abbot's house, a hospital, bath-houses, the monastery church, a poultry-yard, a barn, workshops and a refectory.

Much uncultivated land was given to bishops and monasteries by kings and the nobility. By force and craft, the clergy turned the peasants into serfs. Quite often, an abbot would offer a peasant who had too little land to till a fallow plot. But, having received an additional plot, the peasant had to give his own plot over to the monastery. For the use of his own and the additional plot, he was obliged to work for the monastery. Gradually, the whole village became dependent on the monastery.

In the 6th-9th centuries, two classes emerged in the Frankish state: big landowners and dependent peasants.

- ? 1. Why did it become possible for the nobility, starting with the late 6th century, to take possession of the lands of free community mem-

bers? 2. What means were used by the nobility and the clergy to appropriate peasants' land? 3. What was the difference between the position of a dependent peasant and that of

a free peasant? 4. What were the changes that took place in the Germans' way of life after they had settled in the territory of the Western Roman Empire?

§ 4. The Formation of the Carolingian Empire

(Map No. 2)

1. *Charlemagne*. From 768 to 814, the Frankish Kingdom was ruled by Charlemagne, or Charles the Great. Contemporaries were greatly impressed with him, and many legends and songs about him appeared in the Middle Ages. Contemporary authors wrote that he was extremely tall, strong and hardy. They sang praises to his military feats.

Charlemagne was indeed an energetic ruler and talented military leader. During his reign, the Franks undertook over 50 military campaigns against neighbouring countries. The Frankish Kingdom expanded greatly. Whose interests did Charlemagne promote when waging these wars?

By the end of the 8th century, most peasants in the principal parts of the Frankish Kingdom were already serfs. Big landowners constantly expanded their land holdings. Still, the nobility sought to enhance its possessions and acquire more serfs.

Charlemagne distributed much land in the conquered countries among the Frankish noblemen and brutally suppressed the peasants who tried to defend their freedom. He was merciless with regard to Frankish peasants and conquered peoples.

2. *Charlemagne's Wars in Italy and Spain*. Heading a large force, almost every year, Charlemagne embarked on long campaigns of plunder. Twice, the Franks crossed the high Alps and invaded Italy. Soon the greater part of that rich country belonged to Charlemagne.

His army also undertook a campaign against Spain. Back at the beginning of the 8th century, Spain had been conquered by the *Arabs*, who came from North Africa. The war against the Arabs ended in failure for the Franks, who were forced to retreat. The retreat of the Frankish troops was covered by a small detachment headed by Count



Charlemagne. Bronze, 9th century

Roland, the King's nephew. In the Pyrenees, the men were ambushed and completely exterminated in a fierce battle with the locals.

Later, Charlemagne again attacked the Arabs and captured a small area to the south of the Pyrenees and up to the *Ebro River*.

3. *Subjugation of the Saxons*. The longest and hardest war the Franks fought was against Saxon tribes living to the northeast of the Frankish Kingdom between the rivers *Rhine* and *Elbe*. The Saxons were free and lived in communities, but they too had a rich nobility.

There were eight campaigns against the Saxons. The Franks had a strong cavalry and were well armed, while the Saxons fought in unorganised groups and wore no armour. The Franks were thus able to gain a number of victories, but the moment their army moved away, the Saxons staged rebellions burning and destroying the fortresses the Franks had built in the conquered territories.

To subjugate the free Saxons, Charlemagne used the Christian Church. Soon the country was swarming with priests and monks. The conquerors used force to make the Saxons convert to Christianity. To completely overcome the resistance of the people, Charlemagne introduced severe laws: any breach of obedience to the King or renunciation of the Christian faith was punishable by death. Once, Charlemagne gave an order to execute 4,500 prisoners. But even those harsh measures were useless. For over 30 years, the Saxons fought valiantly for their freedom.

Then Charlemagne managed to win the Saxon nobility over to his side, generously endowing them with land. The Saxon nobles began to support the invaders in the struggle against



Charlemagne with Roland and his friend Olivier. Stained-glass window of the Strassbourg Cathedral (c. 1200)

Roland and his Frankish warriors rebuff the attack of the local people in the Pyrenees. 14th-century miniature



their own people. Their treachery allowed Charlemagne to subjugate the Saxons.

Frankish noblemen, bishops and monasteries received large land holdings in the conquered country and began to turn free Saxons into serfs.

4. *Charlemagne's Empire.* By the end of his reign, Charlemagne had quite a few tribes and peoples under his rule. The size of the Frankish Kingdom almost equalled that of the former Western Roman Empire.

In the year 800, Charlemagne came to Rome and declared himself Emperor. The Pope placed the emperor's gold crown on his head. Charlemagne assumed the title of emperor to consolidate his power over the conquered peoples and extol the Frankish state. The rulers of other European countries sought his patronage and an alliance with him.

Twice a year, Charlemagne convened big landowners for a council and passed edicts with their agreement. Local rulers were counts appointed by the Emperor. To supervise their activities, Charlemagne sent emissaries selected from among his most faithful retainers to all parts of the empire.

By that time, free peasants were so poor that they were unable to buy the equipment necessary for military service. For that reason, Charlemagne practically stopped using them in his army, which now consisted of big landowners who brought their own troops to take part in the campaigns.

A large part of the army consisted of the cavalry. The Emperor distributed land among the warriors so that they could buy weapons and live at the expense of peasant labour. If the warrior left military service, he had to return the land to the Emperor. Later, the warriors secured the right to keep the landed estates they had been given and began to pass them over to their children. Such estates were called fiefs.

A big landowner sometimes owned a whole region with dozens and even hundreds of villages, whereas a small landowner may have owned just one village or simply a few peasant farms.

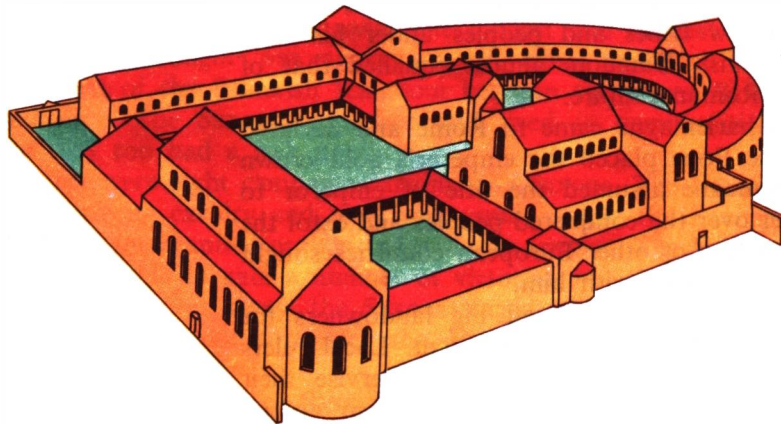
The Carolingian Empire was an early-feudal state. Throughout the conquered territory, this state helped the emerging class of feudal lords-landowners to capture land and turn freemen into dependent peasants.

? 1. What were the purposes of Charlemagne's campaigns against neighbouring countries? On the map, trace the directions of his campaigns and

find the countries he conquered. 2. Why did Charlemagne declare himself Emperor? How was the administration of the empire organised?

How many years had passed between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the formation of the

Carolingian Empire? 3. What new things have you learned about the enslavement of peasants?



Royal residence, 9th century
Compare with the estate of the Frankish kings of the 7th-8th centuries.

§ 5. The Feudal Estate

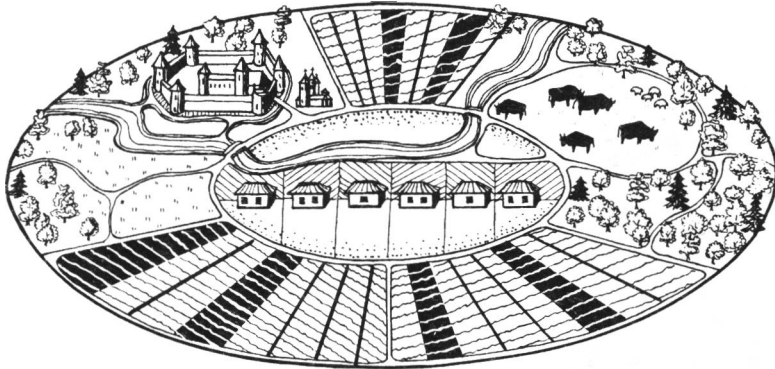
1. The Lord's Demesne and Peasant Plots. In the Middle Ages, the occupation of most people was agriculture—tilling the land and raising livestock. Thus, at that time land was the most important possession.

By the 9th-10th centuries, all land in Western Europe had been seized by big landowners. Fields, forests, waste lands and even rivers were their property. There was a rule that there was no land without an owner. Former communities still existed, but now they were dependent on landowners.

A land holding with peasants, received in exchange for military service, was called a fief, and the master of the land—a feudal lord. The feudal lord bequeathed his fief to his eldest son.

Sometimes a feudal lord from among the nobility could own an entire region with dozens and even hundreds of villages. Frequently, his possessions were scattered all over the country. A warrior who received land in exchange for military service usually owned one village.

Feudal estates, large land holdings where dependent peasants worked, emerged on the land which had formerly belonged to free communities.



Feudal estate.

Draw a comparison with the plan of a neighbour community (see p. 14). What has been carried on from community life? What new features have evolved?

In the centre of the estate stood the *lord's close* surrounded by a fence. Inside were houses of the feudal lord and of his steward (manager), barns to store grain and other produce, stables, cattle-sheds and a poultry yard. Often, the feudal lord had a fruit and vegetable garden. Around the lord's close, in the fields, stood the villages where the peasants lived.

All arable land on the estate was divided into two parts: *the lord's demesne (field)* and the *peasants' strips*. The harvest from the lord's field belonged to the lord. The dependent peasants tilled the strips allotted to them. The forests, meadows and waters were the property of the lord, but the peasant community was allowed to use them.

Apart from the strip, each peasant family had a homestead and a kitchen garden. As distinct from the slaves, the dependent peasants had their own instruments of labour, draught animals and a dwelling. Working on his strip and the homestead, the peasant could feed himself and his family. Using his oxen, plough and harrow, he tilled his lord's field and his own strip.

2. *The Obligations of Dependent Peasants.* In return for using the land, the peasants were forced by the feudal lords to fulfil certain *obligations*, or *imposed duties*.

The peasant had to plough and sow the lord's field and then take in the harvest, and only after that he could attend to his own strip. Often, while he was working in his lord's field, wind and rain would ruin his own harvest.

The peasant was also compelled to do other jobs, without any payment, for his feudal lord: build and repair his house, barns and bridges, clean ponds and catch fish. The peasants' wives and daughters spun linen for the lord, and the children picked berries and mushrooms in the woods for him. The mana-



Dependent peasants being assigned to corvée work. 14th-century miniature

ger and servants made sure that the peasants did not shirk their work. *The work of the peasants on the lord's estate was called corvée.*

The peasants were obliged to give the feudal lord part of what they produced in their fields, kitchen gardens and at home: grain, livestock, poultry, eggs, butter, honey, linen, wool, skins. *The payments the peasants made to the lord in the form of produce were called rent in kind.*

Corvée and rent in kind were the main obligations of the dependent peasants. But the feudal lords continued to introduce new duties. The peasants were obliged to have their grain ground at the lord's mill, their bread baked at the lord's oven, their wine pressed at the lord's press—and then pay for it all. On their estates, the lords charged the peasants tolls for using bridges, roads and rivers.

The peasants also had to fulfil heavy duties towards the church, giving it a tenth of their harvest and cattle's young. This was called the *church's tithe*.

Feudal lord receiving tax in kind. Modern painting



Thus, the lords exploited the dependent peasants through numerous duties and taxes.

3. *The Lord's Power over the Peasants.* Why were the lords able to live by the labour of dependent peasants? Could a peasant refuse to fulfil the duties?

Peasants doing corvée. 14-century miniature



The feudal lords used force to compel the peasants to work for them. If rent in kind was overdue or if the lord thought a peasant did not work hard enough fulfilling the corvée, the peasant was summoned before the lord's court. The implacable master brought in charges, tried the case and passed sentence. He had a right to sentence the peasant to a beating or lashing, chaining, or imprisonment.

The position of serfs who were *in personal bondage* to the lord was even worse. The feudal lord had the right to sell, buy or exchange a serf together with land, although he could not kill the peasant without a court hearing. If the peasant fled the estate, was found and brought back to his master, brutal punishment awaited him.

Often, the owner of the estate would go hunting with his guests and retainers. If the hunted animal dashed across a peasant's field, the dogs and horsemen would chase it, mercilessly trampling the crops and ruining the precious harvest. In the late summer, the peasants' fields were often devastated by flocks of birds, and hares devoured their vegetables. But the peasants were forbidden to kill the animals which ruined their crops.

The lord was master of both the serf's person and his property. For example, if an old peasant died, even before he was buried, the feudal lord's manager would come to his homestead and take away his cow. The inheritance tax consisted of the peasant's best animal. If a peasant's daughter desired to marry

a serf in another estate, her parents had to pay the lord a large sum for his having lost a pair of hands.

In the 9th-11th centuries, a feudal system was established in the countries of Western Europe, a system under which all land and power belonged to feudal landowners, who exploited the peasants dependent on them.

- ?
1. Compare the definitions of a fief and an estate. Could a fief include several estates? 2. What did the dependent peasant have a right to use, and what did he own? Why did the lord allot part of the land for use by the peasants? What were the main obligations of the peasants towards the lord? Why did they have to fulfil them? 3. Why did the feudal lords need to have power over the peasants? How did it differ from the power of slave-owners over their slaves?

§ 6. Peasant Life and Work. Subsistence Economy

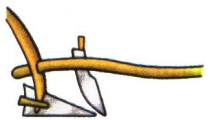
1. Peasant Life. In a medieval village, the shabby dwellings were clustered together. The small wooden huts were covered with straw. There were no chimneys; when there was fire in the grate, thick suffocating smoke filled the crowded room. The walls were always black with soot. Narrow windows without glass let in little light; in cold weather, they were stuffed with rags or straw. To protect the cattle and poultry from cold, in winter they were kept in the same room with the people. The peasants' huts were cramped and dark.

The furniture consisted of a roughly hewn table, a few benches along the walls, and a bin containing flour. The crockery, clay bowls and jugs, was kept on the shelves. The whole family slept either in one bed, which was just a wide bunk, or, more often, on the straw covering the earthen floor.

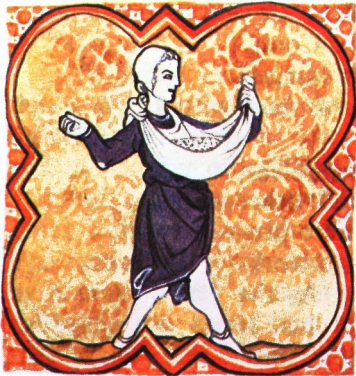
During long winter evenings, by the light of a torch, the peasant made the implements his family needed with the help of primitive instruments, while his wife spun and wove, and made clothes for the whole family. The peasants wore rough homespun clothes and heavy wooden clogs.

The meals were frugal and always the same: flour skilly, fish and vegetables. Meat appeared on the table only on holidays. Even flour did not always last until spring.

Caught in the net of extortion and duties they owed to the lord, the peasants lived in dire poverty.



Peasants' labour implements
See p. 11. Peasant farm. *Miniature*
(France, early 15th century)

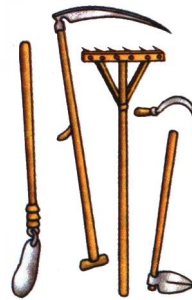


Peasant labour. *Medallions illustrating a medieval manuscript*

2. *Peasant Labour.* The peasants tilled their land with labour implements which did not differ much from those of their fathers and grandfathers. They used light ploughs which only made furrows but did not upturn the layers of earth. Those who had no plough used a spade and a hoe. Many peasants did not even have a harrow, so they used a log with branches which was hauled across the ploughed field. Crops were reaped with sickles. The threshing was done with sticks or flails, and winnowing by throwing the grain up with spades.

There were almost no fertilizers. The peasants kept mostly sheep, goats and pigs. Horses and cows were scarce because they needed too much fodder.

In spending so much time working for the lord, the peasants had no chance to till their own fields properly. Their harvests were very small, only 2-3 times as much grain as had been sown. Even a light frost or a drought could ruin a crop. Then famine set in, lasting for months and even years. At first the people



Peasants' labour implements



Peasant labour. *Medallions illustrating a medieval manuscript*

ate all the livestock and poultry, and then, to survive, they were forced to eat grass, weeds and edible wild plants. Contagious diseases killed thousands of people weakened by hunger.

Merciless exploitation of the peasants by the feudal lords hampered the development of agriculture.

3. *Subsistence Economy.* The peasants provided themselves, their lord, and his family and servants with food and other goods. The things which the peasants could not make were produced by craftsmen, who were also serfs. Large estates had workshops which produced weapons, harnesses, fabrics, etc. As the harvests were small, the peasants had hardly any surplus. If they did, the bulk of it was taken away by the feudal lord. The larger part of the produce received from the peasants was consumed by the lord's household and his numerous servants and guests. The remainder was put into barns for storage. The peasants had so little food and other goods that they could barely subsist and they had nothing to sell. Everything the peasants and the feudal lord needed had to be produced inside the estate.

Both the lord and the peasants bought hardly anything at all. Only salt and iron had to be bartered for food at the places where they were produced. Occasionally, a tradesman would come to the estate, accompanied by servants carrying bales and boxes. He would offer the owner of the estate precious ornaments, bright silk fabrics and expensive weapons brought from the distant Orient. To be able to afford these luxuries, the feudal lords had to sell surplus produce, but this was not easy as all estates produced much the same things. Therefore, even feudal lords seldom had money to spend.

A subsistence economy is the type of economy under which all that is requisite for life is produced on the estate; food and other goods were produced not for sale but for consumption.

- ? 1. What labour implements did the peasants use? Who owned these tools? 2. Why were crop-failures and famine frequent in the Middle Ages? Explain why agricultural instruments were so slow to develop. 3. Which type of economy is called subsistence economy? Why was trade poorly developed at that time? 4. Point out the reasons for the predominance of subsistence economy and its features: (a) trade was underdeveloped; (b) all estates produced similar goods; (c) the peasants produced everything they and the feudal lord needed; (d) there was little surplus because of low harvests and the implements of labour were primitive.

§ 7. The Way of Life of the Feudal Lords

1. *The Feudal Lord's Castle.* On a hill or high rock stood the *castle* towering over the lands around it. This was the lord's dwelling and fortress. There, he hid from insurgent peasants and attacks by other feudal lords.

Initially, the castles were built of wood, and later of stone. Thick walls with merloned towers provided reliable protection. The castle was surrounded by a wide moat of water spanned by a drawbridge; at night and if an enemy was approaching, the bridge was raised by a windlass. When the alarm was given, the warriors serving the feudal lord hastened to take their positions at the walls and towers.

To penetrate into the castle, the enemy had to fill up the moat and break through the heavy oak gate edged with iron. From the walls, the castle's defenders threw stones and logs on their heads, poured boiling water and hot tar, and showered them with spears and arrows. But, even having forced their way through the gate, the assailants did not always seize the castle: they had to storm another, higher wall.



A castle in Germany



Knights at halt. 14th-century miniature

Above the castle buildings rose the main tower. There, the feudal lord with his warriors and servants were able to withstand a long siege. Inside the tower were tiers of rooms where the feudal lord and his family lived. In the basement were a well with drinking water and food supplies. The basement also served as a prison: prisoners and recalcitrant peasants, chained to the wall, were kept in dark, damp cells. A spiral staircase was built into the wall of the main tower, which led to an underground passage providing an escape to a forest or river.

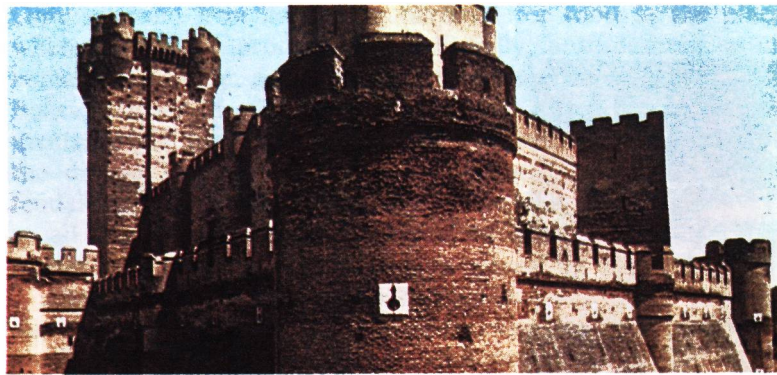
For the peasants, the castle was a constant reminder of the lord's formidable power. Its tall towers and grim walls aroused their hatred.

2. *Knights' Armaments.* It was not easy for unarmed peasants to get the better of even one nobleman. A mounted warrior—*knight*—was armed with a heavy straight sword and a long lance. His shield was so large that it covered him from head to foot. His body was protected by a coat of mail, a piece of armour made of links or scales, subsequently replaced by steel *armour*. The knight wore a helmet and could protect his face with a *visor*, a metal plate with slits to see through. The knights rode strong, hardy horses, which were also protected with armour.

The knight's weapons were very heavy, they weighed up to 50 kilograms. Therefore, the knight was not very mobile. If knocked down from his horse, he could not get up without assistance. To take part in battle on horseback and in heavy armour, long training was necessary, and sons of the nobility were trained for military service from childhood.



11th-13th-century knights. From medieval pictures

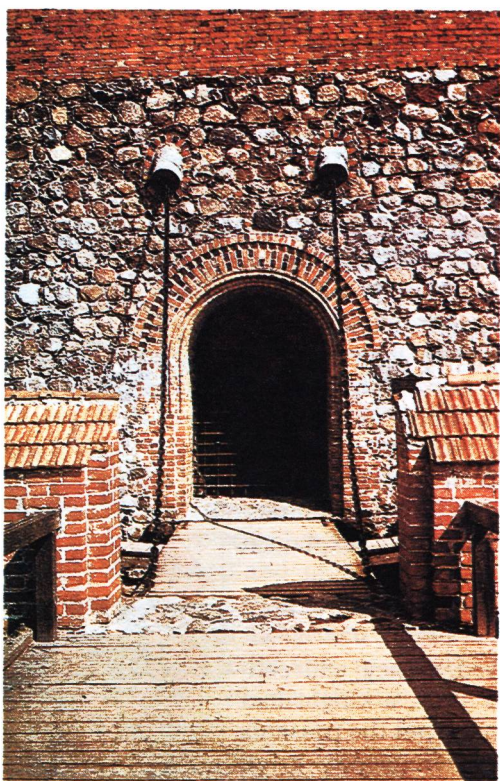


A castle in Spain. The first ring of walls with sturdy corner towers encircles a higher wall with adjacent main tower.

Iron weapons were very expensive; a battle horse and a complete suit of armour cost 45 cows, a whole herd. Only a big landowner whose land was worked by peasants could afford that. This was why for many years fighting became almost the exclusive domain of the feudal nobility.

3. *The Feudal Nobility's Daily Life.* The feudal lords spent their time fighting, feasting and amusing themselves. Their favourite pastimes, hunting and tournaments, were connected with the art of war.

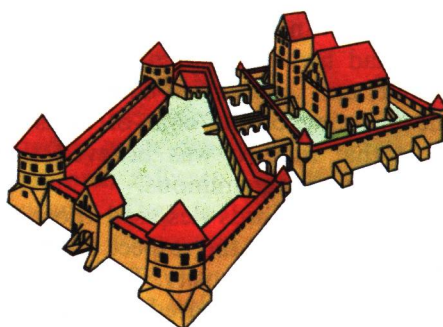
A *tournament* was a military contest of strength and agility between knights.



Trakai Castle in Lithuania

Gate with draw-
bridge

Castle plan. *Recon-
struction*





The armoured and mounted participants in the tournament took up positions at opposite ends in the arena. At a herald's signal they charged towards each other. Each tried to unhorse his opponent with the help of a blunted tournament spear. Not infrequently, the contest ended in serious injury and even death of participants. As a rule, the winner received his opponent's suit of armour and horse as a prize. Tournaments attracted a great number of spectators. The nobility filled the stands, and the common folk clustered around the arena.

A tournament. 14th-century miniature

A boar hunt with hounds. Miniature (France, early 15th century)

The feudal lords set a much greater store on physical strength than on intellect and education. They spent their time mostly practising fencing, riding, wrestling and javelin throwing. They were uncouth and ignorant, many were illiterate and could not even sign their name, putting a cross instead.

During feasts held in their castles, wine flowed like water, the tables groaned under the weight of game which was roasted whole. Jesters, an indispensable part of every feudal lord's household, amused the master and his guests by coarse tricks.

4. *The Morals and Customs of the Feudal Lords.* Violent and arrogant, feudal lords regarded themselves as "noblemen" standing high above ordinary people. They prided themselves on their extraction and their number of noble ancestors. Each feudal lord had his own *coat of arms*—a sign of his family's military valour, and a *motto*—a concise phrase which usually explained the meaning of the coat of arms.

At that time, it was believed that all noblemen were born brave and magnanimous.

The feudal lords despised those who saved money and economised. To win the respect of other feudal lords, a knight had to display his generosity. The incomes received from the peasants and the booty captured in wars were most frequently given

Feudal coats of arms



away as gifts or spent on feasts, hunts, expensive garments and the upkeep of numerous servants and warriors.

Subsequently the feudal nobility drew up a code of *chivalry*: a knight was obliged to seek adventures in order to distinguish himself, to fight against the enemies of the Christian faith, and to protect the weak and the downtrodden. The code of honour operated only in the relations among the feudal nobility; but even there, it was constantly violated. In everyday life, many feudal lords were uncouth, cruel and arrogant.

?

1. Why did fighting become the main occupation of the feudal nobility?
2. What sort of significance did hunting and tournaments have for the feudal lords?
3. What traits were particularly appreciated by the nobility?

§ 8. Feudal Fragmentation in Western Europe

(Map No. 2)

1. *Disintegration of Charlemagne's Empire.* The Carolingian Empire was not very solid and did not last long. The tribes and peoples conquered by the Franks continued living as they always had and spoke different languages. They were brought together by armed force, and only temporarily.

After Charlemagne's death, his heirs fought incessantly. In 843, after one such war, Charlemagne's three grandsons met in the town of *Verdun* to conclude a treaty to partition the empire. Later, three large kingdoms emerged on its territory: *France*, *Germany* and *Italy*. But even within those states there was no unity. Each was divided into large feudal estates, and those, in turn, were fragmented into many smaller ones. This was the time of *feudal fragmentation* in Western Europe.

The nobles supported Charlemagne as long as he helped them capture new lands and turn peasants into serfs. But towards the end of his reign, news came from various parts of his empire that more and more often big landowners were refusing to obey the Emperor's orders. Having seized a great deal of land, Frankish noblemen often formed their own military forces and were now able to control their peasants. They no longer needed a strong emperor and saw no reason to go on supporting him.

Under a subsistence economy, there could be no strong links

between a country's regions. The people in estates were isolated from their neighbours and had little contact with them.

To oversee the peasants' work and force them to serve him, the feudal lord needed an army of his own. As peasant uprisings involved fairly small areas, the feudal lords were strong enough to suppress them without help from the king.



Announcing a court sentence. 15th-century miniature

Consolidation of the feudal lords' ownership of land against the background of a subsistence economy had led to the fragmentation of West European states. In the 9th–11th centuries, the royal authority was very weak.

2. *The Weakness of the Royal Authority and the Independence of the Feudal Lords.* The kings were forced to acknowledge the feudal lords' independence and cede them part of their rights.

The estates of big feudal lords gradually turned into almost independent states. The feudal lord had his own armed force, gathered taxes from the population and was free to try and punish the people. He could even declare war on other feudal lords or conclude peace with them. Those who owned the land had the power.

The French kingdom consisted of fourteen large feudal estates. Many feudal lords had more land and were richer and stronger than the king himself. Big feudal lords—*dukes* and *counts*—maintained that the king was merely “the first among equals”.

In Germany, the monarchy was at first stronger than in France. The kings waged wars of conquest. Having conquered part of Italy, including Rome, the German king proclaimed himself Roman Emperor in 962. Subsequently this state came to be known as the *Holy Roman Empire*. Big feudal lords in Germany

gradually secured their independence from the king. The Italian population never ceased fighting against the invaders. Each successive German king had to undertake another campaign over the Alps in order to reconquer Italy.

3. *Internecine Wars*. Throughout the period of fragmentation, the feudal lords fought continuously among themselves. These wars were called *internecine*. What caused them?

The feudal lords sought to capture neighbouring lands together with the peasants living on them. Since peasants had to fulfil their duties to feudal lords, the more peasants a lord had, the stronger and richer he was. Not infrequently, the objective of the war was to destroy a neighbour's castle or capture another lord.



Destruction of a village during the war.
15th-century miniature

To undermine the strength of an adversary, a feudal lord would wreak destruction on the enemy's peasants: burn villages, drive away livestock and trample the crops. Internecine wars did the greatest damage to peasants; the feudal lords could at least hide behind the walls of their castles.

4. *Suzerains and Vassals*. To maintain his armed force, each big feudal lord gave part of his land with peasants to other, smaller feudal lords in exchange for military service. With respect to the latter, the owner of the land was the *suzerain* (the lord), while those who received land became his *vassals*, or military retainers.

5. *The Feudal Ladder*. The king was head of all the feudal lords in the country. With respect to dukes and counts, he was the suzerain. The dukes and counts had large holdings with hundreds of villages and large armed forces. Next in importance after the counts and dukes came the *barons*, who were their vassals. As a rule, barons had two or three dozen villages and were

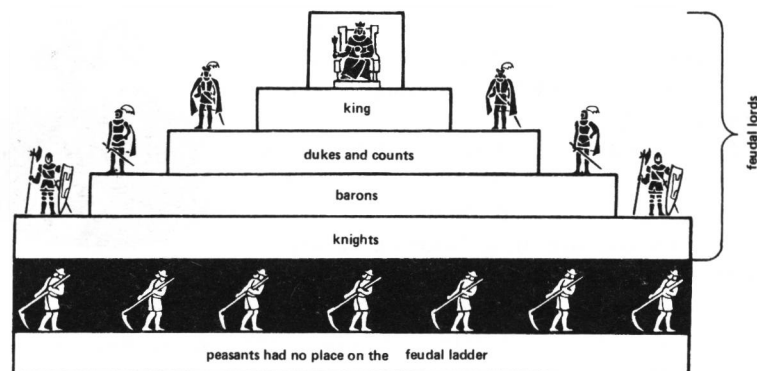


Crown of the Holy Roman Empire (Germany, late 10th century)

Vassal pledging allegiance to his suzerain. 14th-century miniature

Taking possession of a fief, the vassal kneeled before his suzerain saying: "My lord, I am now your man", and then pledged allegiance to him. As a sign of giving over the fief, the suzerain often handed the vassal a weapon, a handful of earth, or a branch.





The feudal ladder

able to equip an armed unit. The barons were suzerains of petty feudal lords, *knights*, who had no vassals of their own.

In this way, the same feudal lord was the suzerain of a lesser lord, and a vassal of a more important one. The vassals were obliged to obey only their suzerains. If they were not the king's vassals, they did not have to obey his orders. This system was based on the rule, "A vassal of my vassal is not my vassal".

The relations between feudal lords resembled a ladder, at the top of which stood the most important feudal lords, and at the bottom—the least important ones. These relations came to be known as the *feudal ladder*.

The peasants did not form part of the feudal ladder. Both the suzerains and the vassals were feudal lords. All—from the poorest knight to the king—lived by the labour of dependent peasants.

At the order of his suzerain, a vassal had to join in a military campaign with a unit of armed warriors. In addition, he was obliged to offer his suzerain advice and pay ransom for him should he be captured. The suzerain protected his vassals from assaults by other feudal lords and insurgent peasants. A knight whose village rebelled despatched a messenger to the suzerain, and the latter hurried to his aid, bringing his warriors with him.

When there was a war with another state, the whole feudal ladder was spurred into action. The king summoned the dukes and counts, who turned to the barons, who brought the knights' units with them. In this way, a feudal army was formed. But quite often, vassals would not obey their suzerains and in such cases, force alone was able to ensure submission.

During the period of fragmentation, the feudal ladder was an

organisation of the feudal class. It helped the feudal lords to wage wars and allowed them to unite in their efforts to subjugate the peasants.

- ? 1. Why did the feudal lords first help consolidate Charlemagne's power and then withdraw their support? What were the reasons for the disintegration of the Carolingian Empire? 2. Which states are said to be fragmented? Prove that within his estate, the feudal lord had the same power as the ruler of a state. 3. What duties did suzerains and vassals have? Who needed the feudal ladder and why? 4. Why do you think feudal fragmentation took place: (a) the partitioning of the Carolingian Empire by Charlemagne's grandsons; (b) the weakening of the king's authority; (c) consolidation of the feudal lords' ownership of land against the background of a subsistence economy? Give reasons for your answer.

§ 9. Slavs in the 6th-10th Centuries

(Maps 1 and 2)

1. *Where the Slavs Lived.* From the earliest time, the Slavs lived in Central and Eastern Europe, to the east of the Germanic tribes. In the 6th century, they occupied a large territory between the Elbe in the west and the upper reaches of the Volga and the Don in the east, from the Baltic Sea to the Danube and the Black Sea (see Map No. 1).

By the 7th century, the numerous Slavic tribes were grouped into *Eastern, Western* and *Southern* Slavs (see Map No. 2).

To the east of the *Vistula* and the *Dnieper* lived Eastern Slavs—the ancestors of the *Russian, Ukrainian* and *Byelorussian* peoples.

Along the rivers *Elbe, Oder* and *Vistula* lived Western Slavs: *Czechs, Poles, Pomors, and Polabians*.

Some of the Slavic tribes inhabited part of the *Balkan Peninsula*. Later, they came to be known as Southern Slavs—*Bulgarians, Serbs* and *Croats*.

2. *Occupations of the Slavs.* The Slavs had no written language until the 9th century. Therefore, when studying the Slavs' way of life in those distant times, scholars have used various historical sources.

Archeologists have excavated Slavic settlements and found iron plough points, axes, scythes, sickles and knives, as well as charred grain in special storage pits. In many places, excavations have yielded remnants of clay stoves, vessels made on a potter's

On the map, find the territory inhabited by the Slavs. Determine the boundaries of the territories where each of the three branches lived.

What were the sources of information about the Slavs' occupations? What were the conclusions drawn by historians?



Slavs' tools and household objects: a hand grinder, an axe, a sickle, a clay vessel

wheel, and bronze and silver ornaments: bracelets, earrings and rings.

Scholars have long been aware that words designating labour implements and animals are very similar in all Slavic languages. This means that these words appeared very long ago, when all the Slavs spoke a common language.

Much valuable information about the Slavs may be found in the works of historians and writers of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was the first to come in contact with Slavic peoples. A 6th-century author wrote that the Slavs had a great deal of various livestock and heaps of fruits of the earth, especially millet and wheat. They settled in forests, near rivers which were poorly navigable, swamps, and lakes; their dwellings had many exits to make escape from danger easy.

These facts are supplemented by a 12th-century German chronicler who noted, describing the living conditions of the Western Slavs, that the abundance of fish in the sea, rivers and ponds was almost unbelievable. All over the country there were plenty of deer, fallow-deer, bears, boars and other game. Butter, sheep's milk, honey, wheat, all sorts of vegetables and fruit trees were plentiful.

3. *What the Slavs' Social System Was Like.* Scholars have learned many interesting things about the Slavs' land ownership and economy from their Agricultural Law (see below). That was an 8th-century collection of customs used to settle disputes and claims.

Find out what changes occurred in the Slavs' social system in the 6th-9th centuries.

A historian from the Eastern Roman Empire wrote in the 6th century about the Slavs that their tribes were not governed by one man but had since ancient times been ruled by the whole people. They made all decisions as to what was good or bad for them jointly.



Slavic village. *Modern painting*

An 11th-century chronicler confirmed that the Pomors settled all their affairs at a public gathering: "All these tribes are not governed by one ruler. They discuss their needs and agree unanimously about what should be done."

In describing wars against Slavic tribes, sources of the time mention the names of many Slavic leaders, the princes, who headed units of cavalry, or *druzhiny*. One Slav nobleman in a Pomor tribe is described as having a unit of thirty horses and horsemen; the might and power of noblemen and military leaders with the Slavs were determined by their number of horses.

During wars, the princes and their *druzhiny* captured rich booty and many prisoners. A contemporary wrote that all went home taking tens of thousands of prisoners with them; another source describes a case when the Slavs could not go any further for they had with them innumerable prisoners, cattle and valuables.

A 6th-century author wrote that the Slavs did not treat their prisoners of war as slaves forever, but limited the term of slavery, offering them a choice: either to pay ransom and go back home, or stay as freemen and friends.

Excerpts from the Agricultural Law

A farmer tilling his field should not trespass upon his neighbour's property; should one do this, he shall lose his crops, ploughland and harvest.

If anybody has taken ploughland from his impoverished neighbour in order to sow crops on it, he shall keep to the contract.

If someone has harvested his plot while his neighbours' plots

have not yet been harvested, and should he drive cattle over and damage his neighbours' crops he will receive 30 lashes.

- ? 1. On Map No. 1, find the territory inhabited by the Slavs since ancient times, and on Map No. 2, the areas where the three branches of the Slavs settled. Which branch produced which Slavic peoples? 2. What were the sources of information about the Slavs' occupations? What conclusions have scholars made after studying these sources? 3. Having read through Section 3, explain: (a) what the Slavs retained from the primitive communal system; (b) the indications of its deterioration.

4. *The Formation of Slavic States.* In the late 7th century, in the lands along the lower reaches of the Danube to the north of the Balkan Ridge, the *Bulgarian Kingdom* emerged. To the north, its neighbours were the *Wallachians* and *Moldavians*, and to the south it bordered on the Eastern Roman Empire. In the 9th century, Bulgaria extended its frontiers; there was even a time when the Empire paid taxes to it. But with the development of the feudal system in Bulgaria, the feudal lords grew more independent, and the monarchy became weaker. The Eastern Roman Empire took advantage of this situation and in the early 11th century conquered the Bulgarian Kingdom.

In the 9th century, *Kievan Russ*, a strong early-feudal state of Eastern Slavs, was formed.

In the 10th century, the *Bohemian state* was formed. Supported by the nobility, the princes of the Czech tribe living in the vicinity of Prague united other tribes under their rule. The feudal system began to develop apace. The warriors received land from the prince, built castles, and turned peasants into serfs.

Germany made an attempt to subjugate Bohemia. But in the struggle against the German feudal lords the Czechs managed to defend their independence. Although Bohemia was included in the Holy Roman Empire, the Bohemian prince ruled his country independently. Later, he assumed the title of king, which was a sign of Bohemia's increased might and influence.

In Poland, the tribes had formed an alliance by the mid-10th century. The first Polish prince known in history was *Mieszko*. His troops subjugated the tribes living along the Vistula. A strong *Polish state* was formed. Mieszko and his warriors adopted Christianity, which speeded up the development of the feudal system. The unification of the Polish tribes was completed during the reign of Prince *Boleslav the Bold*.

Poland was drawn into a bloody war with the Holy Roman Empire. German feudal lords invaded the country several times,

Explain the reasons for the formation of Slavic states.



Bohemian crown,
11th-14th centuries

but always met with strong resistance. Poland emerged victorious from this struggle and even expanded its territory. In the 11th century, the Polish prince assumed the title of king.

In the 7th-10th centuries, early-feudal Slavic states were formed which successfully withstood pressure from external enemies.

5. *The Slavs' Neighbours.* In the west, the Slav states bordered on the Holy Roman Empire. In the 10th century, German feudal lords launched an attack against the east. The Pomor and Polabian Slavs still lived in isolated communities and, although they fought bravely, failed to rebuff the attacks of the invaders. The Slavs were forced to pay heavy taxes. German feudal lords set up estates, built fortresses and monasteries on the conquered lands, and the Slavs were forced to retreat into the woods and swamps.

In 983, the Slavs launched an uprising and won back their freedom for 150 years to come. It was not until the 12th century that the German feudal lords managed to recapture the territory between the Elbe and the Oder.

In the late 9th century, *Hungarian* tribes moved to Europe from the foothills of the South Urals. They settled along the middle reaches of the Danube and subjugated the Slovaks. Their cavalry made forays into West European countries and even reached Paris. The Hungarians were defeated by the united German-Czech force. Their forays stopped, and they gradually adopted a settled way of life. By the end of the 10th century, the *Hungarian Kingdom* was formed.

- ? 1. Compare the occupations and social systems of the Germans and the Slavs at the time their states were formed. 2. Why were the Czechs and the Poles able to protect their independence while the Pomor and Polabian Slavs were not?

§ 10. Cultural Development in Western and Central Europe

1. *How Man Saw the World.* In the first centuries of the Middle Ages, only a few people travelled beyond the village where they lived. The knowledge of most people amounted to what they were able to see from the tallest building in the vicinity—the belfry of the local church. Information about other countries was meagre and fragmented. For a long time, the Europeans had no idea of what was happening outside Europe



and often invented fantastic tales about distant lands.

The church insisted that the Earth was the centre of the universe. Knowledge about nature accumulated in Antiquity was supplanted by conjecture. Many people thought that the Earth was shaped like a disk. They believed that in the sky, which covered the Earth like a dome, the Sun, the Moon and five planets were making their way.

The transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages was accompanied by a decline of culture in Western Europe.

As in Antiquity, people in the Middle Ages were frightened by formidable natural phenomena. The low level of development of science and engineering made them helpless in the face of droughts, floods and epidemics. Feudal oppression also seemed insurmountable to the peasants. Perceiving no end to their suffering and misfortunes, the people turned to God for help. Everyone believed in God – peasants, feudal lords and clergymen alike.

In the Middle Ages religion reigned over the minds and feelings of the people. Man was incapable of explaining the world other than through God and "miracles".

2. *How Children Studied in Parish Schools.* There were no literate people among the peasants; moreover, they were hard to find even among the nobility. Many knights did not know how to sign their names, and put down a cross instead. Even kings were often unable to read or write. For a long time, in Western Europe literacy was the privilege of clergymen: they had to read religious books, learn prayers, and be eloquent in order to convince the faithful that God was all-powerful.

Out of the vast cultural heritage of Antiquity, the Christian Church chose to use only those few things which it needed. Charlemagne directed the bigger monasteries to open schools

Map of the world, 11th century, shows Europe, Asia, and Africa, all the continents known at the time. The East is on top. The Mediterranean Sea is in the middle of the Earth.

Inhabitants of distant countries. *From a medieval book.* Men believed that far-away countries were inhabited by exotic animals and birds, men with horse's legs and dog's heads, or dwarfs the size of a fist.



Monastery school.
14th-century miniature

Medieval library.
Books were kept in monasteries and kings' palaces; the most valuable ones were chained to the shelves.



for the training of clergymen. He ordered that corrections be made in school books and music sheets and warned that the boys were not to be allowed to damage them while reading or writing.

In parish schools, eight-year-olds sat together with young men: there was no division into forms according to age. The pupils had to memorise a great number of prayers, learn to read, write, count and sing hymns. Astronomy was used to calculate the dates of certain church festivals. Geometry provided the knowledge necessary to build churches.

In all countries of Western Europe, teaching was in Latin, which by then no one spoke: it was only used to write books, read prayers aloud and write down laws. Frequently, one book had to suffice for a whole school: the pupils took turns reading out of it.

No one tried to interest the children in what they were studying; learning was mostly by rote. The lazy and undisciplined pupils were given severe lashings. It was said of an educated person that he had "grown under the teacher's rod". Many pupils who graduated from school were only semi-literate.

3. *The Art of Writing Manuscripts.* Large monasteries had workshops where monks copied books which were written on parchment—specially processed calfskin or sheepskin. A manuscript was a real work of art. Many people worked on a single manuscript for a long time: some wrote down the text in elaborate longhand, others painted fanciful capital letters, inserting whole pictures into them, still others drew head-pieces or painted miniatures.

In the 8th-9th centuries, a great number of works by ancient scholars and writers were copied and thus have come down to us.

Books were scarce and very expensive. Only the richest



Bible cover (10th century). Folded sheets of parchment were placed between wooden plates and covered with leather; this is how the first book-covers were made. The metal straps held the book together so that the parchment would not get warped. The cover was decorated with precious stones, silver and gold plates with ornaments and drawings, or with carved ivory.

people could afford to buy them. Kings and high-born noblemen gave each other books as gifts only on the most solemn occasions: when signing a treaty, on the birth of a baby, or for a wedding.

4. *The Creation of the Slavic Alphabet.* Many Slavic peoples adopted Christianity from the Eastern Roman Empire. Church books had to be translated into the Slavic language, and for that, a written language was necessary.

The first Slavic enlighteners were *Cyril* and *Methodius*. In the mid-9th century, Cyril created a Slavic alphabet based on the Greek one. Assisted by Methodius, he translated Greek church books into the Slavic language.

Cyril and Methodius were sent down from Byzantium to disseminate the Christian faith among the Western Slavs. Later, their disciples, persecuted by the German nobility, settled in Bulgaria. They translated a great number of Greek books into the Slavic language. From Bulgaria, the Slavic alphabet came to Russia.

5. *Literature.* In the Middle Ages, people's reading consisted



Copyist. *Medieval drawing.* On the table is a sheet of parchment fixed on a three-edged stand. The monk-copyist is checking the text against the book placed higher up. On the shelves are inkstands and pots of paint. At first, the writing was done with sharpened sticks, later with goose feathers (quills).

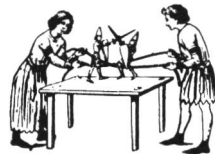
mostly of the Bible and Lives of the Saints which described the "feats" and "miracles" performed by monks whom the church had canonised (i.e., recognised as saints). The books described how these men tortured their bodies wearing chains and ropes, lashed themselves, and avoided temptation. The church urged the faithful to emulate the patience, endurance and firmness of faith of the saints.

Monks living in monasteries wrote chronicles where the history of mankind was said to begin with the "creation of the world" and the causes of all events were explained by the "will of God".

6. *Folk Culture.* The oppressed and downtrodden people created their own culture. Wandering *jugglers* performed in villages, castles, on the roads and in inns. Neither a village wedding nor a tournament could do without them. The jugglers played musical instruments and sang songs and ballads about military campaigns and battles, glorifying the feats of heroes. Bears and monkeys accompanied them; the jugglers performed tricks and acrobatics, and acted out short plays.

Sometimes, they would mock clergymen and feudal lords. A chronicle says that one juggler staged a tournament dressing two monkeys in toy armour and mounting them on dogs. Common people thoroughly enjoyed this mockery of the nobility's war games.

The humour and impudent jokes of the jugglers were not



Jugglers. *Medieval drawings*

to the liking of the feudal lords. The church also persecuted and chased away wandering performers and even refused to allow them a Christian burial.

Folk art often conveyed the protest of the working people against the oppression by the feudal lords and the church.

- ? 1. How can the strong influence of religion on the thoughts and feelings of the medieval man be explained? 2. What did the medieval man see the world like? 3. How were children taught at parish schools? 4. What makes manuscripts real works of art? 5. Why did the common people enjoy the performances given by wandering actors while the church persecuted the vagabonds?

CHAPTER 2

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE IN THE 6th–11th CENTURIES

The Eastern Roman Empire had withstood the pressure of the barbarians. Its capital, Constantinople, stood on the site of the ancient Greek colony Byzantium. After the old name of the city, the state came to be known as Byzantium, or the Byzantine Empire. As compared to Western Europe, the transition to the feudal system in Byzantium had a number of characteristic features.

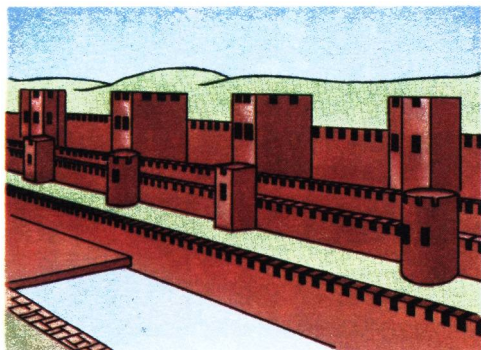
§ 11. The Establishment of the Feudal System

(Map No. 4)

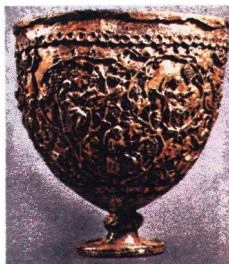
1. Features of Byzantium's Development. The Eastern Roman Empire was comprised of very wealthy and culturally advanced countries and regions: Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. As compared to the Western Roman Empire, the number of slaves here was smaller, and the number of free peasants larger. For this reason, the land in the East was less exhausted and yielded higher crops. Rural dwellers brought their produce—grain, butter, meat—to towns for sale.

In Western Europe, only ruins remained of the once flourishing cities, but Byzantium's towns and cities were bustling with activity. Hundreds of thousands of people lived in Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. In the streets and marketplaces, the numerous workshops and small stores were doing brisk business.

What changed in Western Europe as a result of the Germans' migration?



Walls and towers of Constantinople. Reconstruction



Articles made by Byzantine craftsmen: a bowl, patterned silk fabric

Many of the crafts that were highly developed in Byzantium were quite unknown in Western Europe at the time. Byzantine craftsmen knew how to make jewellery, glass tableware, and woolen and silk fabrics. Their fame had spread even to distant countries. A contemporary called Constantinople a huge workshop of luxuries.



Byzantine ship. Mosaic in San Vitale Church in Ravenna (11th century)

The city stood at the intersection of two major trade routes: from Europe to Asia by land, and from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea by water. Dozens of ships were always moored in its harbour. Trade with Iran, India and China enriched Byzantine merchants, well known in Western Europe where they brought expensive Oriental articles and goods produced by Byzantine craftsmen.

2. *The Emperor's Authority.* In Byzantium, the monarchy was still strong. The Emperor ruled the country with the help of a multitude of officials. The state collected taxes from the peasants and the craftsmen and *dues* from the merchants.

Emperor of Byzantium receives foreign ambassadors. Modern painting



Having a rich treasury at his disposal, the Emperor maintained a strong army and navy. Byzantium was thus able to protect its frontiers from the barbarians and even wage wars of conquest.

Emperor Justinian (527-565) made an attempt to restore the frontiers of the former Roman Empire and consolidate the slave-owning system. Capitalising on the dissent in the barbarian kingdoms, he undertook a number of military campaigns against them. As a result of fierce fighting, which lasted for over 20 years, he managed to conquer the Vandal kingdom in Northern Africa and the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, and to take the southern part of Spain away from the Visigoths. The lands which had earlier been taken away from slave-owners, as well as the fugitive slaves and coloni, were returned to their former owners.

But the expansion of the empire was bought at a dear price. The Byzantine population was groaning under excessive taxes. A contemporary observed that the people fled in crowds to the barbarians, wishing to leave their native land. Uprisings flared up all the time, and Justinian brutally suppressed them. The empire had great difficulty in protecting its borders. In the east, part of the territory had to be ceded to Iran after prolonged wars. Soon after Justinian's death, the empire lost nearly all the territories it had conquered in the west.

3. *Slavs Settle in Byzantine Territories.* Since the beginning of the 6th century, the Slavs, who came from beyond the Danube, began to invade the Byzantine Empire. The Slavs were good warriors. In the wars with Byzantium they gained experience, learned to fight in battle formation and storm fortresses. Courageous Slavic soldiers were able to defeat the mercenary army of Byzantium.

Slaves, coloni and the free poor helped the Slavs. Throughout the Balkans, popular uprisings flared up. This made advance easier for the Slavs.

Whole Slavic tribes settled on the territory of Byzantium, first occupying the north of the Balkan Peninsula, then penetrating into Macedonia and Greece.

In the 7th century, Byzantine territories were invaded by Arabs from the south who captured Syria and Egypt. Several times, the Arab troops besieged Constantinople but failed to capture it.

Byzantium was able to preserve only Asia Minor and the southern area of the Balkan Peninsula. A considerable part of its population was now composed of Slavs.



Byzantine warrior

In the course of their invasions, the Slavs devastated the estates of the emperor and those of the slave-owners. Forming neighbour communities on Byzantine lands, they paid fiscal taxes and served in the emperor's army. Many slaves and coloni became freemen and divided the land of their former masters.

Large estates on which slaves and coloni worked remained only in Asia Minor. But their labour was no longer profitable, and many slave-owners gave their slaves land plots and received from them rent in kind, or leased land to free peasants.

The establishment of Slavic settlements in the territory of Byzantium speeded up the transition from the disintegrating slave-owning system to the feudal system. The bulk of the empire's population was now made up of free members of peasant communities.

4. *The Establishment of the Feudal System.* In the 7th-10th centuries, the free members of peasant communities grew poorer, and many were ruined. The impoverished peasants were called paupers. On the other hand, groups of rich people also emerged in the communities. They increased their land holdings at the expense of their ruined neighbours, and were called "strong". In lean years, the "strong" peasants bought up the plots of impoverished peasants for next to nothing. To capture land, they even attacked the villages.

The state helped big landowners subjugate the peasants. The emperors made the peasants pay the tax for their neighbours who were ruined or had fled. To escape persecution by officials, the paupers settled on the estates of "strong" peasants and gradually became dependent people. *In this way, feudal estates began to appear in Byzantium, and the classes of the feudal lords and dependent peasants were formed.*

5. *The Weakening of Byzantium.* The major feudal lords recruited servants and dependent persons to form their own armed detachments. Holding top positions in the state and the army, they plotted and waged wars against the emperor. Occasionally, one or the other managed to capture the throne.

The Byzantine Empire was growing weaker. The army became smaller, as dependent peasants were not recruited. The impoverished free peasants had no money to buy horses or weaponry. In the second half of the 11th century, Byzantium sustained one defeat after another.

To reinforce the cavalry, the emperors gave feudal lords land plots with peasants for the duration of their military service. The feudal lords received the right to collect taxes from the peasants and live and arm themselves at the expense of their labour.



Byzantine coin, 6th century

In the 9th-11th centuries, the feudal system became firmly established in Byzantium.

- ?
1. Explain why the Eastern Roman Empire proved more solid than the Western Roman Empire.
 2. Why was Justinian's attempt to restore the Roman Empire doomed to failure?
 3. What changed in Byzantium as a result of the Slavs' arrival?
 4. Describe similarities in turning free-men into dependent peasants in the Frankish Kingdom and in Byzantium.
 5. What weakened the Byzantine Empire in the 11th century?

§ 12. Byzantine Culture

1. What Promoted Cultural Development. In the Byzantine Empire, culture and the arts did not decline as they did in Western Europe. The flourishing cities were centres not only of crafts and trade, but of cultural development as well.

Byzantium had trade and other contacts with many countries. During their long journeys, merchants and the emperor's emissaries learned about the life and customs of other peoples. Using the travellers' notes, scholars wrote many books on the history and geography of Byzantium and its neighbouring countries and peoples, including the Slavs.

The fact that Byzantium remained an integral state also promoted cultural development. Engineers and architects were required for construction work and in the military field. To administer the vast country, the emperor needed trained officials, and for contacts with other states, experienced diplomats. He also needed men of letters and artists who would glorify him and his power.

2. The Development of Education and Scientific Knowledge. In the early Middle Ages, Byzantium had many more educated people than Western Europe. Children of wealthy parents learned reading, writing and arithmetic in town schools, studied Homer's poems, tragedies by Aeschylus and Sophocles, and works of ancient scholarship. In Constantinople, a commission was set up consisting of the best experts in Greek and Latin who searched for and copied rare books for the emperor's library.

In the 9th century, the first higher school and medical school in Europe were opened in Constantinople. Each physician living in the capital served a specific district.

A Byzantine scientist invented "Greek fire", an incendiary

Why was the cultural level in Byzantium higher than that in Western Europe?



Greek fire. 13th-century miniature

mixture of petroleum and pitch, which water could not extinguish. This helped the Byzantines defeat their enemies in sea battles.

A high level of development was reached in history and geography. Geographers were skilful in drawing up maps and plans of cities, an art totally unknown in the West. Historians wrote detailed accounts of events in which they took part.

3. *Architecture.* Byzantium preserved many specimens of Antique art. They were searched for and brought to adorn the capital. Constantinople had a great number of magnificent buildings. Dozens of majestic palaces and cathedrals adorned its main streets. The impressive structures were intended to reflect the might and stability of the empire.

The cathedrals of the Christian religion were used for different purposes than temples in ancient times, hence the changes in their structure. In ancient Greece, temples housed statues of gods, while religious ceremonies were held outside, in the square. For this reason, the Greek temple was particularly richly decorated on the outside. The Christians assembled for common prayer inside the church, and architects did their best to make its interior beautiful.

The most brilliant example of architecture was the *Church of St. Sophia* in Constantinople. It was called "the wonder of wonders", and praised in many poems. The emperor did not hesitate to lavish money on the project: he wanted to make St. Sophia the principal church of the capital and of the empire. Its construction was supervised by the famous architects, and it was decorated by the most skilled craftsmen from all over the empire. Ten thousand workers took part in its construction, which lasted for five years—a very short time by the standards of the period. The interior of the cathedral captured the



A capital in St. Sophia



Church of St. Sophia
in Constantinople
(6th century). The
huge dome rests on a
rectangular founda-
tion. The tall turrets
and smaller annexes
were added later.



Church of St. Sophia
in Constantinople.
Cross-section



Church of St. Sophia.
Interior



Emperor Justinian with courtiers. *Mosaic of San Vitale Church in Ravenna (mid-6th century).* The frozen lined-up figures are majestic and dignified. The Emperor (*centre*) hands over to the archbishop a bowl filled with gold coins for adorning the church.

Our Lady of Vladimir. *Early 12th-century icon, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow*

imagination with its space and beauty. The marble floor with its bright pattern was reminiscent of a multi-coloured oriental carpet. Gold and silver vessels, embroidered silk fabrics, and the murals were all outstanding works of art.

4. *Art.* The walls of temples and palaces were adorned with *mosaics*—pictures made from coloured pebbles or small pieces of tinted opaque glass, *smalt*. The smalt was pressed into wet plaster at different angles. When the spectator moved about the room, the mosaic, which reflected light, sparkled and was iridescent.

On walls of temples were *icons*—paintings representing Christ, the saints, and scenes from holy books. Artists painted icons on smooth wooden boards. They tried to reflect man's inner world, especially his religious impulses and sentiments. The figures, painted against a golden or blue background, look flat and static, and their faces are solemn and concentrated. Proportions were not observed: the figure of Christ was usually larger than the others, and the trees and towers were smaller than the people standing by them.

5. *Cultural Contacts of Byzantium.* In the early Middle Ages, Byzantium had the most advanced culture in Europe. Kings, princes and bishops in other countries invited Byzantine painters, architects and jewellers to work for them.

Envoys and church leaders from Kievan Russ, Bulgaria, Italy and even Germany visited Byzantium. Young men in search of learning came there to study mathematics, medicine and Roman law. European architects and painters studied under the best Byzantine artists.

Byzantine culture exerted the greatest influence on the Southern and Eastern Slavs. Russia and Bulgaria adopted Christianity following the example of Byzantium. Afterwards, a great number of books were translated into Slavic languages from Greek. The first stone cathedrals in Russia were built by Byzantine architects.

In Byzantium, manuscripts of Greek and Roman authors were carefully preserved, and it is thanks to this that they have come down to us.

? 1. What were the reasons for the high standard of Byzantium's cultural development? Prove that in the early Middle Ages, education was more advanced in Byzantium than in West-

ern Europe. 2. Describe the Church of St. Sophia using the text and illustrations. What are Greek and Roman influences? 3. How did the Byzantine culture influence other countries?

CHAPTER 3

ARABS IN THE 6th–11th CENTURIES

The feudal system was established not only in Europe but in the Middle East and Northern Africa as well. The transition of the Arabs to the feudal system was accompanied by the emergence of a new religion and speeded up by Arab conquests of other countries, where the feudal order was also being established.

§ 13. The Emergence of Islam. Arab Unification

(Map No. 5)

1. The Natural Conditions of Arabia and the Occupations of Its Inhabitants. The native land of the Arabs was the large *Arabian Peninsula* in Southwest Asia. Its larger part is occupied by dry steppes and semi-deserts, and there are some arid, scorchingly hot deserts. The climate of Arabia is dry and hot, precipitation is extremely rare.

The nomadic Arab tribes—*bedouins* (which in Arabic means “inhabitants of the desert”)—raised camels, sheep and horses. Together with their herds, they roamed the steppes overgrown with rough grass and thorny shrubs. Camels were the bedouins’ constant companions in their rough life. The bedouins’ food was camel meat and milk, they wore camel hair clothes, and found shelter from the scorching heat and the cold winter



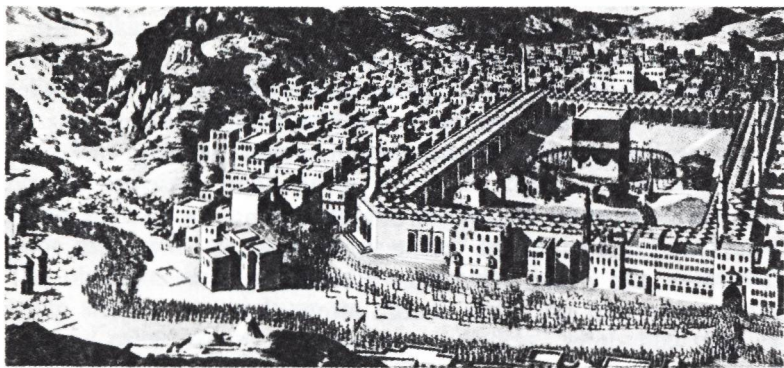
Bedouins on the march. 13th-century miniature

A rest in an oasis. 13th-century miniature

wind in tents made from camel hair felt. When moving to a new place, the camel carried the bedouin's tent and his meagre belongings.

Some Arabs settled in oases in the west and south of the peninsula. Along streams, in the midst of the desert stretched cultivated fields, gardens and vineyards; clay huts stood among tall date palms.

The ancient trade route from Byzantium to Africa and India ran along the Red Sea coast. Gradually, trade settlements sprang up along it, the largest being the town of *Mecca*.



Mecca. In the centre of the square surrounded with a columned gallery is the ancient temple of Kaaba. Fixed in one of its walls is a holy object—the black stone which, according to a legend, fell down from the sky. Thousands of Muslims come to Mecca to worship the black stone.



The nomads conducted brisk trade with settled Arabs. They brought cattle to Mecca and exchanged it for the goods they required such as bread, fabrics, and weapons. Several times a year, Mecca merchants equipped and sent caravans to neighbouring countries.

2. *The Rise of Arab Nobility.* In the early 7th century the Arabs still lived under the tribal system. The bedouin nomads

Caravanserai (inn) on a trade route. *Miniature.* Near the caravanserai is a big market.

were divided into a multitude of tribes and families. Pastures were owned by a tribe as a whole, but the herds belonged to individual families. There were frequent conflicts over the best pastures. The custom of blood feuds, whereby a whole clan was expected to avenge the murder of a member, also gave rise to violent skirmishes. Each tribe worshipped its own deities, and that exacerbated the discord among the Arabs.

Tribes were headed by chiefs, who led the warriors during forays. Bedouins from among the nobility owned large herds of cattle. Their camels and herds of purebred horses grazed in the best pastures near watering places. Prisoners of war were used as slaves, who worked for the chiefs and their families. They dug wells and canals in the oases to irrigate the fields, and tended the nobles' cattle in the steppes. The tents of rich Arabs were lined with carpets; expensive weaponry and beautiful harnesses hung on the walls, and food was served in metal dishes.

Most of the bedouins were very poor. During droughts, when the steppe was scorched and most of the cattle lost, these people suffered from hunger and other privations. Each tribe had quite a few members who had no cattle at all; often, the very poor ate lizards and wild dates.

3. *What Caused the Unification of the Tribes.* The Arab nobility wanted to force common nomads to tend their herds and accept their rule. The poor people responded by stealing the noblemen's cattle and attacking their tents.

The nobility had the intention of conquering rich neighbouring countries—Syria, Egypt and Iran—for valuable booty, land and cattle. The Arab nobility tried to persuade the poor to join in the venture by telling them about the riches of these countries. The nobility sought to unite the Arab tribes in order to consolidate their rule over the poor and involve them in campaigns of conquest.

Arab merchants also welcomed the idea of such wars. In the early 7th century, Iran had conquered the southern part of Arabia, while Byzantium firmly controlled the north of the peninsula. This disrupted Arab trade, as fewer and fewer caravans reached the Red Sea coast. The merchants wanted to send the inhabitants of Arabia on campaigns of conquest to win back the old trade routes and capture new ones.

4. *Islam and Arab Unification.* To subjugate the common bedouins and unite the Arab tribes, the nobility made use of a new religion, *Islam*.

The founder of Islam was *Mohammed*, a Mecca merchant.

He declared that there was no god but Allah, who was all-powerful, and that he, Mohammed, was Allah's messenger and his prophet.

Mohammed urged the Arabs to overcome their dissent and unite under one faith. Soon he acquired a number of followers. Those who adopted the new religion called themselves *Muslims*, which means "obedient to God".

Mohammed was illiterate, but his disciples wrote down his every word on clay tablets and palm leaves. His pronouncements make up the holy book of the Muslims, the *Koran* (the word means "reading" in Arabic).

Just like Christianity, Islam required obedience from the common people. (The very word Islam means obedience.) The religion of the Muslims demands that the faithful show submission to the authorities and the nobility, who are supposedly placed in their position by Allah himself. The Koran protected private property, prohibiting people to covet the riches which Allah gave to some families. No matter how hard the life of a poor man was, he was supposed to be patient and to pray. The obedient were promised an easy and joyful life in heaven while sinners would burn in hell.

Islam called for war against the "infidels", the word used to embrace everyone belonging to other religions. The Koran claimed that those killed in battle would go straight to heaven.

Around the year 630, the majority of Arab tribes converted to Islam and accepted Mohammed's supremacy. Dissenters were suppressed by troops. Mecca became the centre of Islam, the Holy City of the Muslims, while Mohammed was now head of state and of Islam.

With the appearance of inequality and the formation of classes the Arab state was formed.

- ? 1. How did the natural conditions and geographical location of the Arabian Peninsula influence the occupations of its inhabitants? 2. Who wanted the Arab tribes to unite and why? 3. How did the Arab nobility use Islam? What do Islam and Christianity have in common? Was it an accident that the Franks adopted Christianity, and the Arabs, Islam, at the time when classes began to emerge in their societies?

§ 14. The Arab Caliphate and Its Disintegration

(Map No. 5)

1. *Arabic Conquests.* Soon after Mohammed's death, the Muslims subjugated the whole of Arabia. The Arab state was at that time ruled by *caliphs* (Mohammed's successors).

Under the first caliphs, the numerous Arab troops went beyond the boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula. They travelled on horseback, camels or on foot. The main force was the light and swift cavalry.

Like an avalanche, the Arabs descended on Byzantium and Iran. These countries had long been fighting each other, and their might was undermined. Their population, suffering from the hostilities and heavy taxes, did not put up any serious resistance to the Arabs. Many cities surrendered without a fight. Within a short while, the Arabs conquered the wealthiest Byzantine provinces, Syria and Egypt, and the huge Iranian Kingdom.

In the early 8th century, the Arabs conquered Northern Africa. In 711 they crossed the *Strait of Gibraltar* and entered the Iberian Peninsula where the weakened Kingdom of the Visigoths was located. It took the Arabs only a few years to conquer nearly the whole of Spain. Only the inhabitants of its northern mountainous part refused to be subjugated and continued their struggle. The Arab cavalry then crossed the Pyrenees and attacked the Kingdom of the Franks. But in a bloody battle near the city of *Poitiers* in 732, the Franks defeated the Arabs and pushed them back to the south.

Vicegerent of the Caliphate and an applicant. 13th-century miniature

Arab nobleman travelling with retinue. 13th-century miniature



In the east, the Arabs encountered stubborn resistance from the peoples of Transcaucasia and Central Asia. For a long time, the invaders could not make any headway there. But gradually local feudal lords began to side with the Arabs and helped the invaders in the struggle against their own peoples. Moving farther to the east, the Arabs entered southwestern India.

Thus an enormous Arab state, the Arab Caliphate, was formed in the 7th and the first half of the 8th century. Its possessions stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the boundaries of India and China. The capital of the state was Damascus, a large city in Syria.

2. *The Feudal System in the Caliphate.* An incessant flow of booty captured by the Arabs in the conquered countries and thousands of prisoners streamed into the capital. But all this wealth was snared by the caliphs and the nobility. The merchants, who now had an opportunity to trade in various parts of the caliphate's extensive territories, also became richer. But the ordinary warriors remained as poor as ever. An Arab poet once asked why it was that although all took part in the same campaigns, the nobility lived a life of plenty, while the people remained paupers. *The spoils of war served to enhance the inequality among the Arabs.*

Nearly all land in the caliphate was considered the property of the caliph. Part of the land he distributed among his kinsmen and retainers. Arabs belonging to the upper crust were made governors in the conquered countries. The Arab nobility turned into feudal lords and landowners, and the peasants found themselves dependent on the new masters.

In the East, farming was possible only on irrigated land. There was a saying: "Where the water ends, the land ends." On the caliph's order, thousands of peasants were assembled together to build irrigation facilities. The canals and dams belonged to the caliph or feudal lords.

The peasants had to pay a high tax for using the land and the water, and it made no difference to the tax collectors whether the harvest was good or bad. Even when a hurricane covered the fields with dust and sand, or locusts ruined the crops, tax was collected in full in proportion to the size of the cultivated area.

The caliphate also made extensive use of slave labour. Slaves worked in mines, drained swamps and built canals. They were also used as servants in the homes of the nobility and as soldiers in the caliph's guard. But the bulk of the

working population in the caliphate was made up of dependent peasants, not slaves.

3. *Popular Uprisings.* The conquered peoples were severely oppressed by the Arab invaders. The inhabitants of the subjugated countries were forbidden to carry arms or wear the same clothes as the Arabs. All non-Muslims had to pay extremely heavy taxes and supply the troops with food. To prevent the peasants from shirking taxes, they were made to wear lead plates around their necks stating their place of residence.

In the 8th-9th centuries, a wave of popular uprisings spearheaded against Arab domination and feudal oppression swept across the caliphate.

The uprising in *Azerbaijan* continued for almost 20 years. The insurgents were called "people in red": that colour was the symbol of their rebellion against the caliphate. The uprising was led by *Babek*. A camel driver in his youth, during his travels with caravans, Babek saw how people suffered and came to hate their oppressors. Under his leadership, the insurgents routed six armies of the caliph in succession. The peasants refused to obey the authorities or pay taxes and reverted to the old communal system.

From Azerbaijan, the uprising spread to Armenia and Iran. According to an Arab historian, panic and great terror reigned in the caliphate's capital at the time. A huge sum was offered for Babek's head. He himself was promised pardon should he surrender. His proud reply was that he would rather live one day free than forty years as a pitiful slave. The caliph was compelled to send his main force to suppress the uprising. Well armed, the troops managed to defeat the rebels. Babek was betrayed and captured by a local feudal lord to whom he had appealed for shelter. He was handed over to the caliph and sentenced to a slow and painful death.

Powerful uprisings took place in the other areas of the caliphate as well.

4. *Disintegration of the Caliphate.* The huge Arab Caliphate was not very solid. Uprisings of conquered peoples gradually undermined it.

Big feudal lords—governors of large regions—consolidated their positions. Having at their disposal troops and thousands of dependent peasants and slaves, they refused to obey the caliph and sought to become independent rulers.

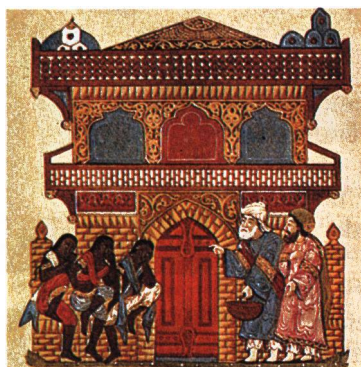
In the mid-8th century, an independent Arab state emerged in Spain with the city of *Córdoba* as the capital, later, the state became known as the *Caliphate of Córdoba*. The eastern

part of Arab possessions was incorporated into the *Baghdad Caliphate* with the city of *Baghdad* on the river Tigris as its capital.

In the 9th century, Egypt, Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan broke away from the Baghdad Caliphate, which now had only Mesopotamia under it. In the 11th century, a larger part of Arab territories in Asia was conquered by the Seljuk Turks, nomads who came from Central Asia.

The Arab Caliphate fell apart following the strengthening of the position of big feudal lords and as a result of the struggle of the subjugated peoples for independence.

- ?
1. Point out on the map the boundaries of the Arab Caliphate in the 8th century and the countries conquered by the Arabs. Why were the Arabs able to subjugate many countries? 2. How were the feudal systems in the caliphate and in the West European countries alike? How
 3. On the map, find the regions of popular uprisings in the caliphate. What were the causes of these uprisings? 4. Why was the disintegration of the caliphate inevitable? What are the common reasons for its collapse and the collapse of the Carolingian Empire?



Arab building. *Miniature*

Singing a song to accompaniment.
13th-century miniature

§ 15. The Culture of the Countries of the Caliphate

1. Why the Culture of the Countries Comprising the Caliphate Was Very Advanced. The cultural level of the Arabs was initially much lower than that of the majority of peoples they had subjugated; there were very few literate people among the Arabs.

The ignorant invaders destroyed objects of great artistic value. Legend has it that after Alexandria was captured, the caliph gave an order to set fire to the library of ancient manuscripts saying that if the books and the Koran disagreed, the books had to be destroyed, and that if they agreed, the manuscripts were superfluous.

Gradually, the Arabs assimilated the achievements of the conquered peoples in science and the arts.

The caliphate incorporated many countries which had centuries of cultural development behind them: Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Central Asia. The Arabic language became widespread: it was spoken, used in court proceedings and taught at school. Syrian, Iranian and Central Asian scholars and authors wrote in Arabic. In the countries of the caliphate, Arabic became the language of science and literature.

Thus, the culture of the caliphate's countries was created not only by Arabs but by all the peoples comprising the Arab state.

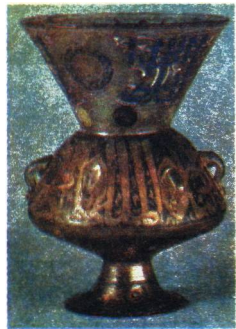
The development of culture was promoted by economic advances. On irrigated land, barley and wheat were grown, and dates and sugar cane were cultivated. From the peoples of Southeast Asia, the Arabs learned to grow cotton, rice, oranges and lemons, these crops and fruit later became widespread in European countries as well.

Skilful craftsmen made light and durable cotton and wool fabrics. Iran was famous for its carpets. Syrian craftsmen produced bright silks and glassware. The armourers of Syria were world famous: swords, scabbards, and armour made of Damascus steel were highly valued by feudal lords in all countries.

Arab merchants traded extensively. Through sultry deserts and over high mountains, they brought silk and porcelain from China. Fabrics and precious stones came from India by sea. Arab merchants frequently travelled to Western Europe and even to the banks of the Volga, where they sold their expensive Oriental wares. Their trips to distant countries East and West promoted international cultural exchange.

2. *Science.* Arab scholars stated that knowledge was man's best asset. In the countries of the caliphate, mathematics, astronomy and geography – the sciences connected with the crafts and trade – were particularly advanced. The larger cities had institutions of higher learning. In Baghdad, a library of highly valuable manuscripts by Greek scholars had been collected; it was known as the treasury of wisdom.

Articles made by Arab craftsmen:
1. Ornamental gold pitcher (Iraq, 10th century)



2. Glass lamp (14th century)

Arab mathematicians created algebra. They used Indian numerals, which were later borrowed by the Europeans and which even now are called Arabic numerals in Europe.

Using sophisticated instruments, the astronomers were able to give a rough estimate of the size of the globe. *Al-Biruni*, a Central Asian scholar, advanced a brilliant hypothesis about the Earth revolving around the Sun.

A much respected discipline in the Arab world was geography. A proverb said: "He who takes to the road for the sake of science will be the first to enter heaven." Arab travellers described the countries of the caliphate, India and China, penetrated deep into Africa, and explored Eastern Europe. They charted maps of the countries and seas known to them.

Arab ship. 13th-century miniature

At the chemist's
(from a 13th-century miniature)



Another science which was very well developed was medicine. In the 11th century, Central Asia produced a great scholar *ibn-Sina* (in Europe, he was known under the name of *Avicenna*). He wrote over a hundred scientific works. Ibn-Sina was particularly famous as a physician. He described the symptoms of many diseases which physicians before him had been unable to recognise. Called "the head of all scholars" in the East, he was persecuted by the Muslim clergy as an infidel.

3. *Literature*. Along with the expensive wares, merchants and camel drivers brought back wonderful tales from their travels. These were recounted in the palaces of the caliph and the nobility, and in the streets and homes of the simple people of Baghdad. The rich preferred stories of thrilling adventure and travels; in the squares and marketplaces, porters and fishermen told and re-told funny stories about crafty people who outsmarted judges, merchants and officials. Later,

these stories were brought together in the world-famous collection *Thousand and One Nights*.

Arab poets composed verses about the life of the nomads and their heroism at war. Poetry reached its greatest height in Iran and Central Asia; there, the poets wrote mostly in the Tajik-Persian language.

One of the most famous poets was *Firdausi*. For over 30 years he worked on his poem *Shah-Nameh* (Book of Kings). It describes the struggle of the Iranian people against invaders and glorifies the illustrious feats of legendary heroes. The poet wrote with great respect about those who toil to earn their daily bread. He urged the rulers to stop internecine wars and to enhance the prosperity of their countries. Firdausi's attitude towards Islam was critical, and the clergy persecuted him. He died in poverty; it was forbidden to bury him in a Muslim cemetery.

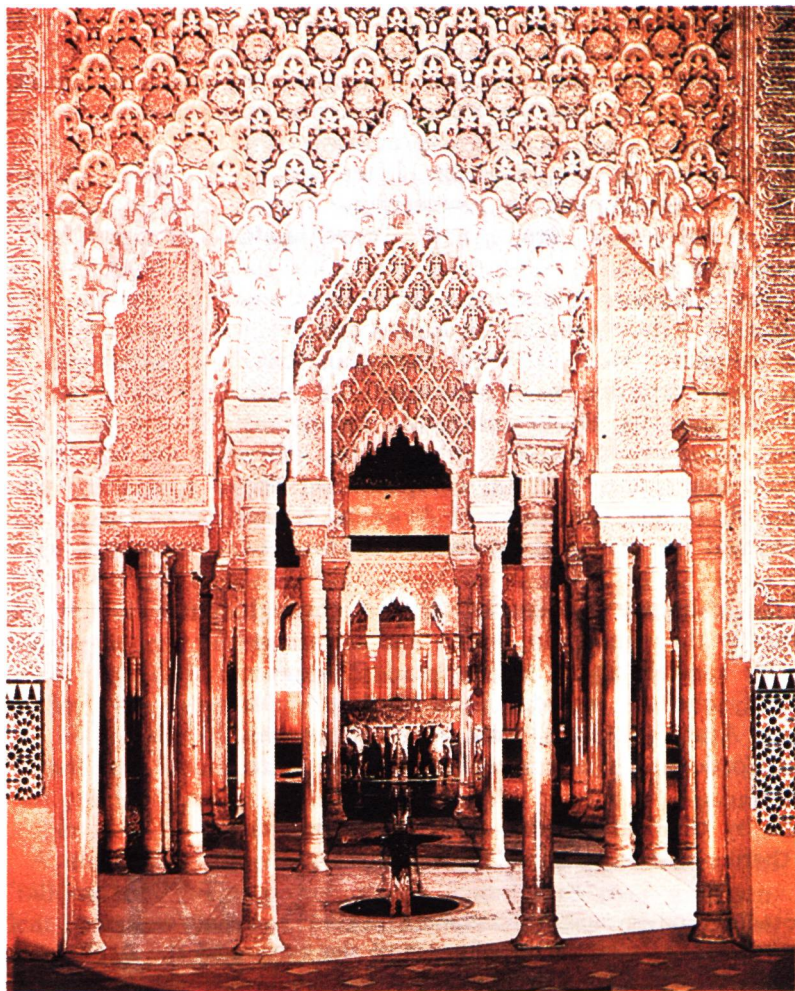
4. *Art.* Architecture flourished in the caliphate. Architects built magnificent palaces, tombs and fortresses for the caliphs. The whole world knows about *L'Alhambra*, the residence of the Spanish kings in *Granada*.

Muslim temples are called *mosques*. The rectangular lower part of the mosque is crowned with a dome; inside is a spacious courtyard with a pool, surrounded by a gallery with many columns; adjacent to it is a hall where the Muslims assemble for prayer. Near the mosque stands a *minaret*, a tall tower from which the faithful are summoned for prayer.

Arab buildings are richly decorated with stone carvings, and tiles; mosaics cover both the walls and floor. The walls of buildings are painted over with *arabesques*, intricate



Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem (late 8th century)



Lion's Courtyard in
L'Alhambra, Spain
(14th century)



Mosque in Córdoba.
Interior (8th-9th cen-
turies)

interwoven patterns. The lacework stone carvings and colourful ornaments create an impression of weightlessness.

The Muslim religion did not allow images of people or animals to be depicted. That is why in the early centuries of the Middle Ages painting and sculpture practically did not develop in the countries of the caliphate. Later, books came to be illustrated with miniatures representing scenes from the life of the people, court events and distant lands with fantastic animals and birds.

5. *The Role of the Caliphate's Culture*: The Europeans acquired a great deal of valuable scientific knowledge from the countries of the caliphate. Medieval West European scholars were guided in their work by the achievements of Arab mathematicians and astronomers. Besides numerals, Europeans borrowed the names of many stars from the Arabs; they also learned to chart maps and use the compass and the globe. For European physicians, the works of Avicenna translated into Latin remained the principal reference books up to the 17th century.

The culture of the caliphate's countries filtered through to the Europeans mostly through Spain, which had been conquered by Arabs. Its capital city, *Córdoba*, had 27 higher schools where eminent scholars, including non-Muslims, gave lectures. Apart from Arabs, students from many European countries studied in Córdoba. Its extensive libraries contained ancient manuscripts.

Quite a few works by classical scholars and writers became known in Europe thanks to their Arabic translations.

- ?
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What promoted the advancement of culture in the Arab Caliphate? | caliphate make? 3. What was the influence of the culture of the Arab Caliphate on other countries' cultures? |
| 2. What scientific contribution did scholars living in the countries of the | |

CONCLUSION TO PART ONE

1. *How Was the Transition to Feudal System Accomplished?*
We have completed the study of the first stage in the history of the Middle Ages, which lasted from the 5th to the 11th century and is known as the *Early Middle Ages*. This was the time when *the feudal system was established* in the majority of European, Asian and North African countries.

Many peoples—the Germans, Slavs, Arabs—made the transi-

tion to the feudal system from the primitive communal system. In ancient times they had had no private property, classes, or state. But by the Early Middle Ages these peoples had made good headway in land cultivation and cattle breeding. This led to the appearance of surplus produce which the nobility could appropriate, exploiting poorer members of the community; it is in this way that inequality emerged.

Land and labour implements became the private property of individual families. With the emergence of private property, classes appeared, and wherever classes exist, a state is always formed. The oppressors needed the state as a means of subjugating the working people.

The peoples of what had been the Roman Empire made the transition to the feudal system not from the primitive communal but from the slave-owning system. That transition was accelerated by barbarian invasions and the struggle of the masses. Unprofitable slave labour was replaced by the more productive labour of dependent peasants.

2. *What Are the Main Features of the Feudal System?* Under the feudal system, two main classes existed, feudal lords and dependent peasants.

The feudal lords owned the land and exploited the dependent peasants. While a slave spent all his time working for his master, the dependent peasant had some time to himself and could work on his farm, using his own tools. Part of the harvest yielded by the plot was the peasant's property.

A slave was considered the property of his master, his "talking tool". The power of the feudal lord over a dependent peasant was not absolute: he had the right to sell the peasant, usually together with the plot, or severely punish him, but under the law was not allowed to kill him.

As opposed to slaves, dependent peasants had some incentives to work better. They tried to improve methods of cultivating land so as to produce more; they took care of their labour implements and improved them.

But as the farms were usually small and the exploitation harsh, agricultural techniques developed very slowly and harvests remained low. The prevalence of subsistence economy was mainly due to the primitive level of farm implements. In the Early Middle Ages, different regions produced similar foods and articles. Trade was underdeveloped.

Heavy feudal oppression resulted in a fierce class struggle between the feudal lords and the peasants. At first the peasants

Why and how did the Germans, the Slavs and the Arabs pass on to the feudal system?

Why does the state emerge with the formation of classes?

How did the transition to the feudal system of the peoples of the former Roman Empire proceed?

What were the main classes under the feudal system?

How did exploitation of dependent peasants differ from exploitation of slaves in Antiquity?

How did the authority of the feudal lord over his peasants differ from that of the slave-owner over his slaves?

What was the difference between the slaves' and the dependent peasants' attitude to labour? Why did subsistence economy prevail in the Middle Ages? Why is class struggle inevitable under the feudal system?

tried to protect their land and their freedom; later, they did their best to prevent their feudal duties from increasing.

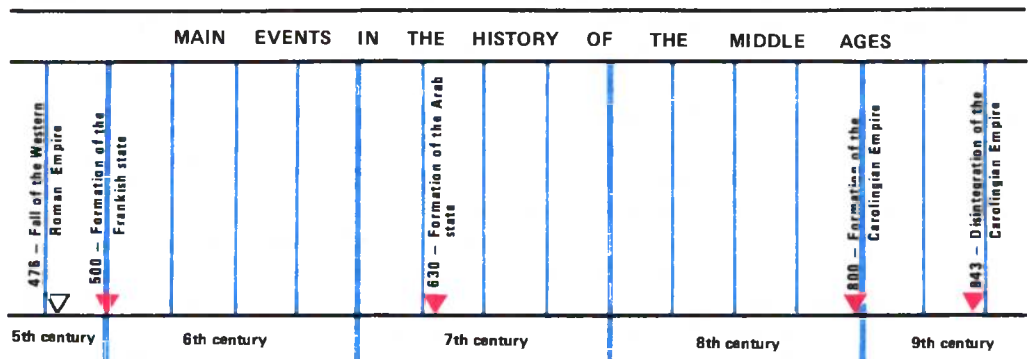
When the feudal system was just beginning to evolve, early-feudal states emerged in a number of countries. The states helped the nobility capture land and enserf peasants. But when the feudal system became firmly established, the early-feudal state was replaced by feudal fragmentation.

In the Early Middle Ages, the feudal state had two chief purposes: to suppress the opposition of the oppressed class and to wage wars. In this, it was supported by the church.

What changes occurred in the feudal state between the 6th and the 11th centuries?

What caused them?

What purposes were served by the feudal state?



PART TWO

The Development of the Feudal System



CHAPTER 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFTS AND TRADE. THE GROWTH OF TOWNS IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

In the early centuries of the Middle Ages, there were few towns in Europe. But by the 14th century there was already a dense network of towns scattered all over Europe. Major changes in the life of the European peoples in the 11th-15th centuries were connected with the emergence and growth of medieval towns.

§ 16. The Emergence of Medieval Towns

(Map No. 6)

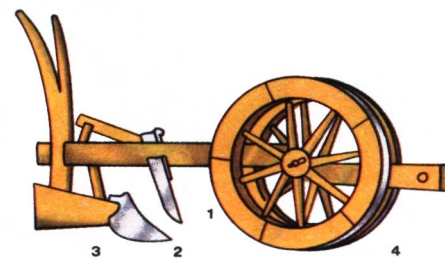
1. Economic Development. By the 11th century, the forested areas in Western Europe were considerably diminished. In the thick woods, the peasants felled trees and rooted out stumps to clear the land for crops. In many localities, swamps were drained. Land which was formerly unutilised was now cultivated.

The peasants worked hard on their farms to get better harvests. Now, they had more iron tools. Along with the light plough, heavier ones with wheels came to be used. Having deeply ploughed the earth, the peasants then loosened it with harrows which had iron teeth.

The three-field system

Wheeled plough. The plough has a blade (1) which cuts the soil from above, an iron ploughshare (2) which cuts the soil from underneath, an earthboard (3) which moves the earth aside, and a wheeled front (4) which makes it easier to move the plough.

			first year
spring crops	winter crops	fallow land	
			second year
fallow land	spring crops	winter crops	
			third year
winter crops	fallow land	spring crops	



The two-field system was replaced by a *three-field system*. Arable land was divided instead of two into three parts: the first was used for winter crops, the second, for spring crops, and the third lay fallow. Now not a half but only a third of the land did not yield a harvest.

To prepare the land for winter crops, the peasants ploughed it two or even three times and then fertilized it. Market-gardening, horticulture and vine-growing were developing apace. Agricultural produce was now more plentiful and diverse. In England, for instance, the harvests exceeded the amount of seeds sown four and even five times.

As the areas of arable land and the harvests grew, so did the amount of fodder. The number of cows and oxen on peasants' farms increased. Horses were now used not only in the army but for carrying loads and for ploughing. This made tilling the land quicker and easier.

A great deal of metal was required to make iron labour implements. Production of iron ore in Europe increased, the smelting process was improved and ironsmithing was highly developed.

People were no longer content to dress in linen. Woollen fabrics appeared; people said that sheep had conquered flax. Fabrics were woven on large horizontal looms.

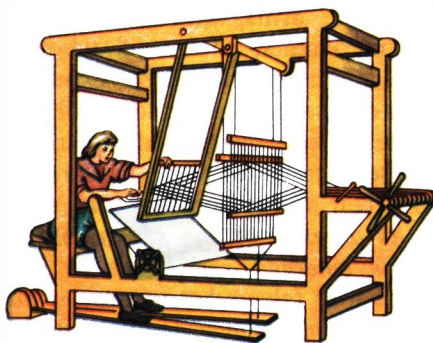
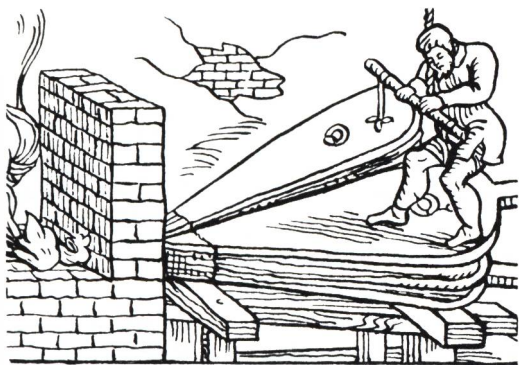
With the establishment of the feudal system, important changes occurred in the economy: both land cultivation and cattle-breeding, as well as the crafts were developing rapidly.

2. *The Separation of the Crafts from Agriculture.* In the early centuries of the Middle Ages, the peasants made their implements themselves. There was no distinction between crafts and agriculture.

But to make a plough with an iron ploughshare, or

Smelting furnace.
Medieval drawing
Having loaded the furnace with iron ore and charcoal, a worker used hand-operated bellows to pump in air.

Horizontal loom



woollen fabrics, special equipment was necessary, as were special knowledge and skills. It became difficult for a peasant to be both a craftsman and a farmer.

Among the peasants, *craftsmen*, persons with special skills, who knew a particular trade, were distinguished from the rest. As a rule, they came from families where work experience had been accumulated for generations. Village blacksmiths, carpenters, potters and other craftsmen spent less and less time tilling the land. Their trade became their chief occupation.

Thanks to better harvests, peasants sometimes had surplus produce which they were able to exchange for the wares made by craftsmen.

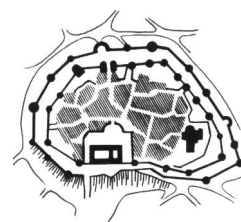
Economic development resulted in the gradual separation of the crafts from agriculture. The crafts became the full-time occupation of a large group of the population called craftsmen.

3. *The Emergence of Towns in Europe.* Items made by craftsmen were more durable and attractive than those made by peasants, and were in increasing demand. A craftsman could barter his wares for food. His craft fed him. But in the villages, the number of customers was too small, and the feudal lord appropriated most of the craftsman's wares as part of tax in kind. So craftsmen began to escape from the estates. Carrying a box of tools on his shoulder, the craftsman moved from place to place in search of buyers.

With time, these itinerant craftsmen settled down. Their huts clustered around large monasteries and castles of the nobility, or sprang up among the ruins of Roman fortresses. Their settlements also grew up at intersections of major roads, near river crossings and busy sea harbours.

Why did craftsmen choose such places to settle? The inhabitants of monasteries and castles gave them orders for furniture, arms, and clothes. These places were frequented by merchants, many of whom subsequently settled there. The merchants brought expensive Oriental wares, as well as iron, salt, skins, and wool. Peasants from nearby villages came to sell their produce and buy the things they needed. These were the places where the craftsmen were able to sell their wares and buy raw materials.

As a result of the separation of the crafts from agriculture, towns emerged and began to grow in Western Europe. The division of labour between towns and rural areas was increasing: whereas in villages inhabitants were engaged in agriculture,



Plan of Carcassonne,
France

the towns were centres of the crafts and commerce.

To protect themselves from invasions by knights and robbers, the craftsmen and merchants surrounded their settlements by an earthen wall and a moat, then reinforced the wall with a fence. Later, these fortifications were replaced by stone walls. A traveller heading towards a town could see its walls and turrets from afar. The entrance to the town was through a sturdy gate, always zealously guarded. Only a large force could seize a town thus fortified.

The first towns appeared in Italy and the south of France, where the crafts had separated from agriculture as early as in the 9th century. In the 10th-11th centuries, towns emerged in other West European countries as well.



Walls and towers of
Carcassonne

- ?
1. What was new in the economy of Western Europe in the 10th-11th centuries? Why did the economy develop better with the establishment of the feudal system than in the last centuries of the Roman Empire?
 2. Explain why it was in the 10th-11th centuries and not earlier that towns

began to emerge in Europe: (a) why did the crafts begin to separate from agriculture; (b) why did the craftsmen leave the villages; (c) where did their settlements appear; (d) what was the main distinction between a medieval city and a village?

§ 17. The Crafts in Medieval Towns

1. *A Craftsman's Workshop.* There were no factories in medieval towns. The goods sold at the market were made in small *craftsmen's workshops*.

The workshop usually occupied the ground floor of the



Craftsmen's workshops. Modern paintings

craftsman's house. There were no machines; everything was done by hand with simple tools. To cast a ploughshare, the blacksmith used tongs to take a piece of red-hot iron out of the furnace, then he placed it on an anvil and hammered it into the desired shape, which took considerable time and effort.

The techniques of craftsmen developed very slowly. As a rule, a father passed on his skills to his son. Together with the secrets of the trade, he usually handed over his simple tools as well.

With long periods of training, vast experience and advanced skills in manual work, craftsmen frequently attained perfection in their trade. Cloth-weavers learned to make fine soft fabrics and dye them, and armourers made richly decorated armour and swords.

2. *Who Was Employed in a Workshop.* The principal worker was the *master* craftsman. He owned the workshop, all its equipment and tools. The master bought raw materials and made goods out of them. He worked on each article throughout the process of its manufacture. Frequently, the workshop also sold the finished goods.

A town craftsman owned his tools and was an independent labourer in his own workshop. As distinct from a peasant, he either filled other people's orders or made things for sale.

Apart from the master, there were also *apprentices* and *journeymen* in the workshop. Teenage apprentices were learning the trade and did auxiliary work. It took a long time, from two to seven years, to master a trade. When a father apprenticed his son, he left him in the master's charge for several years. An apprentice's life was not easy. He had to help with household chores, and, very often, was subjected

See p. 75. Town construction in progress. Miniature (France, 15th century)

to abuse and beatings.

The chief assistant of the master, his right-hand man, so to speak, was the journeyman, a former apprentice who had already mastered the trade. From dawn till dusk, he toiled in the cramped workshop. For his hard labour he received a little money. But when he managed to save the necessary sum, he could become a master and open his own workshop.

In order to do this, he had to pass a difficult test: using his own money and material, he was to produce a *masterpiece*—the best piece of craftsmanship.

There was hardly any division of labour in the workshops: the master and the journeymen worked on each article from beginning to end, passing from one operation to the next.

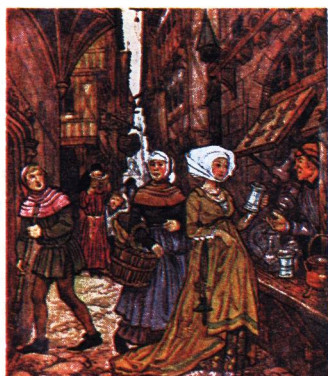
In medieval cities, the crafts were a form of small-scale industrial production based on manual labour.

3. *Craft Guilds*. Each craftsman worked in his own workshop, but all of them had many interests in common. Only united could they ensure their safety from oppression and from robbery by feudal lords.

For a long time, the peasants continued to make all the items they needed themselves. Therefore, at first there were very few customers to buy the goods produced by the craftsmen. The craftsmen working in towns needed more customers and protection from the competition of their village counterparts, so *the craftsmen engaged in the same trade and living in the same town united into associations called guilds*. There existed guilds of weavers, shoemakers, masons and many others.

At a general meeting, members of a guild adopted *Rules* which were binding on them all. The Rules required that all craftsmen make high-quality goods based on a certain

Market square and streets of a medieval town



standard, specified how many looms or other tools a craftsman could have and how many apprentices and journeymen he could employ in his workshop, and forbade the craftsmen to lure customers away from one another.

What was the purpose of guild Rules? The guilds sought to keep the workshops small, so that craftsmen could not get rich at the expense of others. The guilds tried to make working and selling conditions the same for all craftsmen.

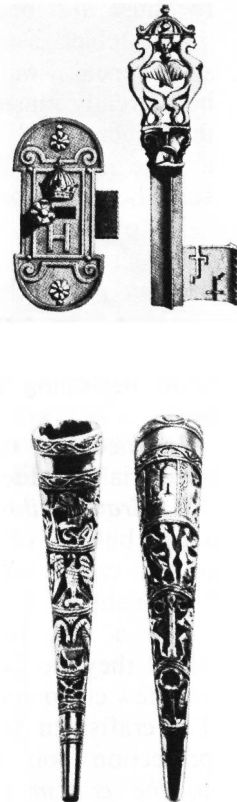
The guilds were headed by *elders* elected by the members. The elders made sure the Rules were observed and strictly punished those who violated them. If a London baker sold a bun which weighed less than the Rules specified, he was taken around the city in a cage and became an object of general ridicule. The most common punishment was a fine.

Wishing to have full control over their markets, guild members persecuted and even evicted craftsmen who did not join the guild. They ensured that craftsmen from other towns or from the countryside did not sell their goods at town markets.

4. *The Role of Guilds in Urban Life.* A craftsman's whole life was tied up with his guild. The guild held craftsmen's festivals. When a member died, his widow and small children received money from the guild's aid fund. Members of the guild took turns patrolling the town and formed a unit of the town's armed force. United into guilds, the craftsmen jointly fought against the town's enemies. Each guild had its own emblem, flag, church and even cemetery.

For a long time, the guilds served to promote the development of the crafts and the manufacture of high-quality goods. New trades and guilds emerged in the towns. In the 13th century, Paris had over a hundred guilds, and in the 14th century—350. *The division of labour between the guilds was increasing.* Within the guild of blacksmiths, weapon-makers and then armourers and swordmakers set up independent guilds. Shoemakers and belt-making and bag-making guilds branched off from the tanners.

But as the number of masters in towns increased, competition among them intensified. No matter how hard the guilds tried to maintain equality, some of the craftsmen became richer, while others grew poorer. The guilds began to put obstacles in the way of apprentices who wished to become masters. Only sons of masters could easily become masters themselves.



Artifacts made by craftsmen: a horn, a lock and a key decorated with figures of fanciful animals

An increasing number of people in towns remained apprentices all their lives. They were called "life-long apprentices". Apprentices united into associations—*fraternities*—and demanded better working conditions of their masters. They organised strikes: groups of apprentices refused to work for the masters who exploited and oppressed them.

The guilds did not permit the expansion of workshops or introduction of new tools. At times the elders destroyed valuable innovations and did away with the inventors. By the end of the Middle Ages, the existence of guilds began to hamper the development of new machinery and slowed down the growth of industrial production in the towns.

§ 18. The Struggle of Towns Against the Suzerains.

The Urban Way of Life

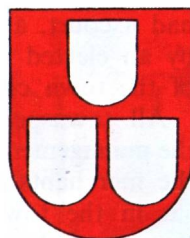
1. *The Town and the Suzerain.* No matter where a town was built, it stood on land belonging to a feudal lord. The entire population of a town was in bondage to the suzerain. The citizens paid him tax in kind, which consisted of the goods the craftsmen produced. The lord's officials sat in court, collected fines and other payments.

At first the lords encouraged the growth of towns on their land. As the towns grew larger and richer, the feudals tried to obtain more and more income from them, introducing new taxes and often taking by force whatever they liked in the merchants' and craftsmen's shops.

Repressions and robbery by the feudal lords impeded the development of the crafts and trade in the towns.

2. *The Struggle of Townspeople Against the Suzerains.* Townspeople wanted to free themselves from bondage to the feudal lord. Often, they would take a solemn oath to staunchly resist the lords. Sometimes war would break out between the townspeople and the lord, and last for dozens and even hundreds of years. The townspeople had to withstand exhausting sieges and repulse violent attacks from feudal armies.

In the 12th-13th centuries, the struggle between feudal lords and towns was taking place in all West European countries. Some cities gained independence as a result of bloody wars and uprisings, others bought freedom from the suzerain. Many towns, however, failed to set themselves free



Guilds' coats of arms.

Bottom: house-painters' coats of arms



The storming of a city. Modern painting

from bondage.

3. *What the Towns Managed to Attain.* Having won independence, the townspeople introduced *self-government*, taking the management of town affairs into their own hands. A town had a court, a treasury and an armed force. It was governed by an elected *town council*. In France and England, the head of the town council was called *the mayor*.

All townspeople fought against the suzerain together, but the management of town affairs was taken over by the wealthy—the merchants and owners of town buildings and land. They sat in the town council, made all the decisions concerning the use of the treasury and troops, and controlled the courts. They shifted the burden of fiscal taxes to the shoulders of the craftsmen.

As a result of the struggle of towns against their suzerains, the people won their freedom from fealty. If a serf who had fled from his lord managed to stay in a town for a year and one day without being found and returned to his master, he became a freeman. The Middle Ages maxim “City air makes free” could be seen in operation.

Having set themselves free from the power of suzerains, the towns began to grow at an even greater pace. There was a constant influx of people who had fled the countryside and whose labour added to the towns’ wealth.

4. *Urban Life.* By today’s standards, the population of a medieval town was not large, as a rule less than 5 or 6 thousand. Only a few West European cities, including London, England, and Paris, France, had a population of tens of thousands.

The townsfolk’s main occupations were crafts, trade and, for a long time, agriculture as well. Cultivated land, or-



City wall (cross-section): part of the wall; a tower; a pent-house; loop-holes; a moat

chards and vegetable gardens stretched all around the town walls, and herds of cattle grazed in the meadows.

The fenced-in towns were rather cramped, and for this reason the houses had two or three storeys, the upper ones hanging over the lower. The streets were narrow. For a long time, the streets of West European towns were neither paved nor lighted. Slop was poured out of windows and onto the streets. During the rainy season, puddles were so big that one could well drown in them. Cramped living conditions and dirt facilitated the spread of contagious diseases which killed a great number of people.

Streets of Siena, Italy. By Ambrogio Lorenzetti (14th century)



The only spacious place in a town was the market square. Not far from here stood the town's principal church, *the cathedral*, the tallest and most handsome building in the town. In the marketplace, the citizens built *the town hall* where the council held its sessions.

Nearly all houses were made of wood. This is why whole blocks would be destroyed during fires, which often occurred.

5. *The Town's Wealthy and Poor Citizens.* Rich houses, decorated with merlons and turrets, towered over the shabby huts of the paupers. Rich people stood out in the crowd with their expensive clothes; their wives flaunted valuable jewellery, which the wives of common people were forbidden to wear.

The number of poor people grew steadily. They did the most arduous and dirty work for rich merchants and craftsmen: washed and combed wool, carried heavy burdens and loaded goods. The paupers had enough to eat only on days when they managed to find work. After epidemics and wars, which took place frequently, a great number of disabled and mutilated people assembled in towns; they became beggars or thieves. In lean years the towns overflowed with peasants who had fled villages stricken with famine. The authorities ordered that they be driven out of town with sticks.

Unskilled labourers, life-long apprentices and paupers made up *the urban poor*.

The paupers waged a relentless struggle against the rich people who exploited and oppressed them. Urban uprisings, a frequent occurrence, were brutally suppressed by the rich townspeople. Quite often, wealthy people applied to neighbouring feudal lords for help. During peasant uprisings, the town poor were on the side of the peasants in their struggle against the feudal lords.



City gate



Town hall

- ? 1. Why was a medieval town a fortress? Compare its fortifications with those of a knight's castle. Why was a town harder to conquer than a castle? 2. Why did the towns struggle to set themselves free from bondage to the suzerains? What did they achieve in the course of the struggle? How can you explain the fact that while many towns managed to win independence, the peasants remained subject to the lord's power? 3. What groups made up the urban population? What were the occupations and way of life of each? 4. Describe a medieval town.

§ 19. The Development of Trade in Europe

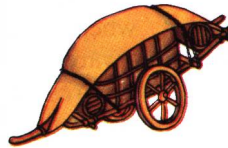
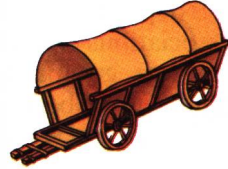
(Map No. 6)

1. *Expansion of Trade Contacts.* Craftsmen produced a steadily increasing number of *commodities*—goods for sale. They needed raw materials to make new items and required bread and other foods. As farming improved, the peasants had more and more surplus produce. They sold it in towns and used the money to buy articles produced by craftsmen. The feudal lords, attracted by the goods made by town craftsmen, also began to take the produce of their estates to town markets. The towns were becoming the trade centres of their localities.

But these trade contacts were not enough for the townspeople. The towns began to trade with distant regions and even with other countries.

In the Middle Ages, trade was a profitable yet difficult and hazardous occupation. On land, merchants were robbed by “noble” highwaymen—knights, and on sea, by pirates. Merchants had to pay tolls for passage over land belonging to a lord and for the use of bridges and river crossings. To increase their incomes, feudal lords built bridges even on dry land and demanded compensation for the dust stirred up by the merchants’ carts.

The roads were narrow and unpaved; in spring and autumn they were all but impassable because of the mud. The carts often broke down, and goods that fell on the ground became the property of the owner of the land. If a shipwrecked boat was washed ashore, the goods it carried were snatched by the feudal lord who owned the shore.



Merchants’ carts. As the roads were narrow, the horses were harnessed tandem. The carts had either two or four wheels. The wheels were encased in iron hoops. The sides of the cart were usually made from wooden planks. For long journeys, covered carts were used.



Peasants on their way to the market.
15th-century engraving

Money transactions between merchants.
15th-century miniature

To protect themselves from robbers, merchants united into associations—*merchant guilds*. They hired guards and travelled in large groups. Sometimes merchants themselves engaged in highway robbery or piracy.

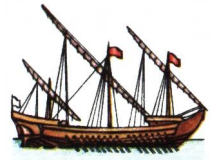
2. *Oriental Trade*. Since ancient times, Europeans had had trade contacts with Oriental countries. They made voyages across the Mediterranean to reach the ports of Syria and Egypt, where Arab and Iranian merchants brought precious Oriental wares. European merchants bought *luxury items* from them and resold them to rich people in their countries, at a high profit. The most lucrative field of commerce was trade in spices—pepper, cinnamon and other seasonings for rather bland European food. The spices were weighed on pharmaceutical scales and sold in small quantities; they were worth their weight in gold. It was with good reason that a very rich man in the Middle Ages was mockingly called “a sack of pepper”.

The profitable trade routes to the East were dominated by merchants from the Italian cities of *Venice* and *Genoa*. These cities competed and were at war with Byzantium and with each other. Bitter fighting erupted repeatedly in the course of centuries.

Venice and Genoa were autonomous city-states where power had been seized by rich merchants. The wealthy people owned fleets, dozens of houses, warehouses and shops.

Oriental trade helped Mediterranean ports, especially Italian ones, to grow in size and become richer.

3. *North European Trade*. An important trade route lay across the Baltic and North seas. Here merchants bought and sold salt, furs, wool, woollen fabrics, wax, timber, iron and many other commodities required for the economy. This trade



Venetian galley



Hanseatic ship. The hull is rounded. At the bow and at the stern are elevated platforms where the sailors assembled during battle. Square sails were replaced by fore-and-aft sails, which allowed the ships to move with the side and even head wind.



Venice. From a painting by Canaletto (Italy, 18th century). The Grand Canal. The Column and St. Mark's Cathedral. In the centre, the Palace of Doges (Venetian rulers)

was carried out by merchants from the cities and countries of Northern Europe, from *Novgorod* in Russia to London in England. The centre of trade was the city of *Brugge*.

In the 14th century merchants from German towns formed the *Hanseatic League (Hansa)*, which embraced over 70 cities, in order to work their way into the trade conducted in Northern Europe. Its centre was the German town of *Lübeck*.

The Hansa merchants tried to oust their competitors from trade conducted in the region of the North and Baltic seas. In Novgorod, Brugge, London and other cities, they owned fortified trade yards. They made good profits selling their goods and buying up local produce. The Hansa had a large fleet and often used arms to win itself advantageous trade terms in neighbouring countries. Twice it fought with Denmark and forced the Danish king to recognise Hansa's special privileges.

4. *Fairs and Moneychangers*. The brisker trade in Europe was done at *fairs*—annual events which attracted merchants from different cities and countries. The merchants brought to the fairs goods that were in demand and sold them wholesale to small tradesmen and craftsmen.

In the 13th century, the most famous fairs were those in the northeastern French county of *Champagne*, which went on nearly all year round. At the Champagne fairs, both Oriental luxury items and goods from Northern Europe were sold.

The fairs were always crowded and noisy. Between the rows of merchants' stalls stood the low tables of *moneychangers*. Merchants were in great need of their services, as each country used money of different weight and coinage. Money was struck not only by kings but by big feudal lords and large cities as well. France alone minted no less than 80 dif-



Medieval European coins

Fair in Champagne.
Modern painting





ferent coins. For an established fee the moneychangers supplied the merchants with the money accepted at the given fair in exchange for the currency the merchants had.

Gradually, moneychangers amassed great fortunes, and they began to lend money. The borrowed sum had to be returned by the agreed time and with a certain amount of interest. Thus, moneychangers were turning into *usurers* or *money-lenders*. The interest rate was, as a rule, high, with the debtor having to pay back up to twice as much as he had borrowed.

With the development of trade, great wealth was accumulated in the hands of merchants, moneychangers and usurers.

The division of labour between towns and villages promoted the development of both agriculture and the crafts.

Specialising in one craft, a town craftsman reached a high degree of mastery over his trade, improved the tools and methods of work.

The peasants had more time to cultivate fields and raise cattle. In the town they were able to buy well-made work tools. The methods of farming were also improving.

The separation of the crafts from agriculture made people's labour more productive.

The city scale. *Bas-relief* decorating a house in Nuremberg (late 15th century). The scale was used in the market square for weighing large batches of goods.

In an Italian bank. 14th-century miniature

- ? 1. Why did the improvements in agriculture and the crafts promote the development of trade? 2. Why did the division of labour between towns and villages raise labour productivity in the crafts and farming?

CHAPTER 5

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE 11th–13th CENTURIES. THE CRUSADES

§ 20. The Power of the Catholic Church

1. *The Church Schism.* Up to the mid-11th century, the Christian Church was unified. But in Western Europe, it was headed by the *Pope*, and in Byzantium, by the *Patriarch* of Constantinople.

From Byzantium, the Christian faith spread to Eastern Europe. Yet the Pope wanted to control this area, too. The Byzantine church opposed papal interference into its affairs.

There were bitter conflicts between the Pope and the Patriarch over supremacy in the Christian Church and the division of incomes.

In 1054, a split in the Christian Church occurred. The Pope and the Patriarch damned each other to perdition. Since that time, the Western church came to be called *Catholic* (which means “universal”), and the Eastern church – *Orthodox* (meaning “the right faith”). After the schism, both churches became completely independent.

2. *Consolidation of the Papacy.* In Western Europe, which was fragmented into numerous feudal estates, the Catholic Church enjoyed much influence. The Pope’s treasury contained a large number of valuable objects, and he owned magnificent

Which countries converted to Christianity following the example of Byzantium?



Monks and nuns at prayer. 15th-century miniatures

palaces and castles. He also had a mercenary army and his own ambassadors. Hundreds of thousands of clergymen in different countries were at his command.

The popes sought to subordinate European monarchs, which caused a bitter controversy in the 11th century between Pope *Gregory VII* and the German king *Henry IV*. Each declared the other divested of authority. The Pope released Henry's subjects from their oath of allegiance to the king. The big feudal lords (princes) of Germany staged a mutiny against the king. Henry IV was forced to seek reconciliation with the Pope. With a small retinue, he travelled to Italy, where the Pope resided in the *Canossa* castle in the country's north. For three days, Henry IV came to the castle barefoot and wearing only a long robe, the clothing of a repentant sinner. Finally, he was admitted to the Pope and, kneeling, begged for and received forgiveness.

The papacy attained its greatest might at the time of Pope *Innocent III*, in the early 13th century. Innocent III declared that the Pope is God's deputy on the Earth, and that the rulers of countries should be his vassals. During official receptions, everyone had to kneel before the Pope and kiss his shoe. Not a single European king was shown such subservience. Innocent III intervened into the European countries' internal affairs and relations between them. The kings of England, Poland, Sweden and Denmark agreed to consider themselves his vassals.

No crime was too heinous for the popes to commit in their struggle for power. Referring to the papacy, a contemporary said that the Papal throne was occupied not by human beings but by monsters in human form.

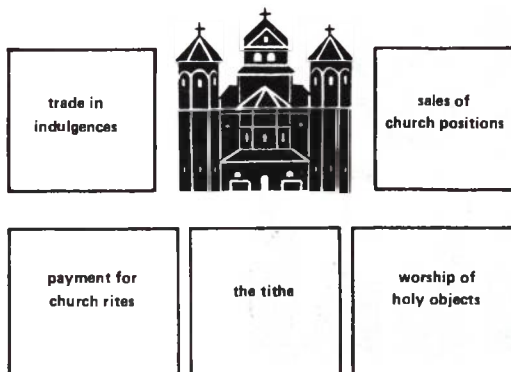
3. *The Church as the Biggest Feudal Lord.* In the Middle



Clergymen: a bishop, a priest, a monk



Pope Innocent III.
Mosaic



Sources of wealth of
the Catholic Church
and the Pope

Ages, about one-third of all cultivated land in Western Europe belonged to the Catholic Church. Bishops and monasteries had hundreds and even thousands of serfs. Large herds of cattle grazed on lush pastures belonging to monasteries, church granaries were filled with grain and their cellars contained some of the best wines.

The bishops and abbots differed little from other feudal lords. Despite the church's prohibition, they fought in wars, held tournaments and wore silk and velvet. To be able to afford all this, they raised their peasants' duties. The *corvée* and rent in kind were particularly high on monastery lands.

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was a major feudal lord and merciless oppressor of the working people.

4. *Church Wealth Increases.* The clergy collected a tithe from the entire population of Western Europe. Church-goers also had to pay for wedding ceremonies, the baptising of children and other church rites.

Valuables poured into the Pope's treasury in Rome from all over Western Europe. The papacy claimed a right to pardon the believers' crimes and sins for a certain sum of money. The church sold special documents called *indulgences* (from Latin "kindness", "complaisance"). Monks took indulgences to towns and villages and sold them in market squares. Murderers, highwaymen and thieves were able to buy dispensation not only for crimes already committed, but for future ones as well. Officials of the Papal Court compiled a special list which indicated how much each sin was "worth". The sale of indulgences was immensely profitable.

How did the Christian Church become a big land-owner?



Church utensils:
Precious bowl
(France, 12th century)
Casket for keeping
"holy relics"
(France, 10th century)



Monks selling indulgences. 16th-century engraving. Right, the man sitting by the barrel is making seals to be attached to the scrolls. Left, a buyer is paying for an indulgence.

- ? 1. How was the Christian Church divided into Catholic and Orthodox churches? 2. Which facts show that in the 11th-13th centuries the power of the Papacy increased? 3. How did the clergy and the Pope accumulate their riches?

§ 21. The Struggle of the Catholic Church Against the Heretics

1. What the Church Taught the Faithful. The preservation and strengthening of the feudal system served the interests of the church. It taught the people that God had divided them into three groups: the first, to say prayers for all (the clergy), the second, to wage wars (the feudal lords), and the third, to work (peasants and craftsmen).

The Christians believed that after death, depending on a man's behaviour during his lifetime, his soul went either to hell, where it would be doomed to eternal suffering for his sins, or to heaven, "the kingdom of God". Clergymen insisted that, acting as an intermediary between God and the people, only the church was able to save man from God's wrath by praying for him.

The clergy brainwashed the faithful into thinking that struggle against the existing order was against God's will. Any protest was considered a manifestation of impudence and vanity, the worst sins according to the church. Church-goers were told to love their enemies, obey the authorities, fulfil their duties and pay taxes.

Christian morality was called upon to instil humility and patience in the oppressed people and suppress all thought of struggle against the feudal order.

2. What the Heretics Fought Against. Despite the strength of the Catholic Church, more and more peasants and townspeople were opposed to it. The clergy called such people *heretics* (the word is derived from the Greek *hairetikós*, "able to choose").

The heretics were against lavish church rites and said that the church had deteriorated. They demanded that the clergy stop collecting tithes and give up their lands and riches.

Many heretics came out in defence of peasants and paupers. They were against feudal duties and taxes, criticised the clergy for idleness and urged them to earn their living by work.

Some even advocated renunciation of private property and equality of property.

Remaining religious people, the heretics usually preached submission and patience. They were more than willing to suffer for their convictions.

The struggle of the heretics reflected the protest of the masses against oppression by the feudal nobility and the Catholic Church.

3. *How the Church Fought Against the Heretics.* In all countries, the church persecuted the heretics and subjected them to harsh punishment. One of the worst punishments was *excommunication*. Someone who had been excommunicated could be robbed or even killed with impunity; believers had no right to give him help or shelter. Sometimes, the Pope excommunicated whole regions and even countries. Then churches were closed, there were no weddings, babies were not baptised, and the dead could not be buried in cemeteries.



Defence of the church from the enemy. 15th-century miniature

The Pope and other clergymen are defending the church from heretics (blindfolded men) and sins (women with spears).

The church launched military campaigns against regions which were known to have many heretics. In the early 13th century, Pope Innocent III called on the feudal lords to undertake a campaign against the heretics in the rich southern provinces of France. Knights from northern France, hoping to seize rich spoils, were quite willing to take part. The Pope promised remission to the participants in the campaign. Many prosperous French cities were destroyed and plundered, and their inhab-

itants killed. In one of the towns, Catholic troops killed 20,000 people.

4. *The Inquisition.* To combat heresy, the Pope established a church court—the *Inquisition*. Using the services of spies and informers, the Inquisition tracked down heretics and persons suspected of religious dissent. The accused were thrown into prison and subjected to brutal torture in order to extract a confession. Their feet were burnt, and their bones broken in a special vise. Many people, unable to bear the torture, confessed to things they had not done, and implicated innocent people. Handing over the person sentenced to be executed to the authorities for execution, the church made a hypocritical plea for mercy, requesting a “bloodless” death. That meant that the convicted person was to be burned at the stake. The persecution of heretics greatly enriched the clergy as the property of the convicted heretic was divided among the authorities, the church and the informer.



Gold candlestick
(England, early 12th
century)



The burning of heretics in France in the early 13th century. 15th-century miniature
Present at the execution are the king and his retinue.

In Spain, where the Inquisition was particularly active and ruthless, the burning of heretics at the stake came to be known as *auto-da fè* (the act of faith). The execution was staged as a major church ritual: it took place in the town's main square before crowds of people. Often the nobility and the king himself were present.

The church used the Inquisition to persecute participants in uprisings, as well as scholars and writers who advanced ideas that questioned its doctrine.

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was a mainstay of the feudal system. In its struggle against the enemies of the latter, it used various methods ranging from persuasion to violence.



Instruments of torture used by the Inquisition

? 1. Why did the Catholic Church have an interest in the preservation and consolidation of the feudal system? What did it do to convince the believers that the feudal system was a just one? 2. How did the struggle of the heretics reflect the

protest of the masses against feudal oppression? 3. How did the Catholic Church fight against the heretics? 4. Why did protest against feudal oppression in the Middle Ages usually assume the form of opposition to the Catholic Church and its doctrine?

§ 22. The First Crusade

(Map No. 7)

1. *The Church Organises Military Campaigns in the East.* In 1095, on a vast plain near the city of *Clermont* in France, the Pope spoke before a huge crowd. He urged those assembled to take up swords and join the march against the Eastern countries to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels—Muslims. Christian legend had it that Jesus Christ was buried in the city of Jerusalem in Palestine. The Pope promised absolution to all participants in the campaign. A chronicler reports that the Pope's address was repeatedly interrupted by shouts of "God wills it!". To demonstrate their eagerness to set off towards the Holy Land straight away, many people sewed red crosses on their tunics. Participants in the military campaigns in the East came to be known as *crusaders*, and the campaigns themselves as the *Crusades*.

2. *Causes of the Crusades.* The last years of the 11th century, filled as they were with feudal wars and natural calamities,



Pope Urban II
speaks in Clermont.
15th-century min-
iature

were especially difficult. Europe had to live through “seven lean years”—a whole series of crop failures, loss of cattle and mass epidemics. The peasants were starving while the feudal lords tried to raise duties and taxes. Despair and famine chased peasants away from their native villages. They viewed the campaign in the East as a chance to break free from their masters.

The growth of cities and the development of trade awakened an unquenchable craving for more wealth among the feudal nobility. Town markets offered craftsmen’s wares and luxury articles from distant countries. To increase their incomes, the feudal lords wanted to acquire more land and serfs. Yet by the end of the 11th century, Western Europe had no more unoccupied land, and nearly all peasants had already been enserfed.



Crusaders boarding the ships. 16th-century miniature

In the 11th century, many knights who were landless appeared in Western Europe. These were mostly younger sons of noblemen who had not inherited anything other than a horse and armour. War and plunder were their chief occupations. The knights formed the main strike force in the Crusades. It was their cherished dream to get rich through plunder and to acquire land.

The clergy also dreamed about new acquisitions in the East. The Pope wanted to further increase his power and income by subjugating the countries in the East.

As you probably remember, in the mid-11th century, the greater part of Arab territories in Asia was conquered by Seljuk Turks who converted to Islam following the example of Arabs. The Seljuks attacked Byzantine troops, routed them and

conquered nearly all of Asia Minor. Soon afterwards, however, the vast state of the Seljuks was split into principalities. This gave Western feudal lords the hope that it would be easy to conquer the rich countries in the East.

3. *The Poor Peasants' Campaign.* West European peasants were the first to embark on the road towards Jerusalem. Despair and hunger drove them from home; feudal oppression was becoming unbearable. In the Eastern campaign the peasants saw a chance to break free from their lords. In the new lands, they hoped to become free farmers.

In the spring of 1096, disorderly crowds of the poor began their trip up the Rhine and then down the Danube. Creaking carts carried whole peasant families in search of a better life in unknown lands. A chronicler wrote that there were as many of them as there are stars in the sky or specks of sand on a beach. Almost unarmed, and with hardly any food, they moved towards unknown Jerusalem, begging and plundering on their way. At the sight of each big city they inquired whether this was Jerusalem.

A great many peasants died before they reached Constantinople. The Byzantine Emperor hastened to get rid of them and shipped crowds of peasants off to Asia Minor, where most of them were killed in the very first skirmish with the Seljuk Turks. Only a few managed to escape. Not freedom but death was their lot in the East.

4. *The First Crusade.* In the autumn of 1096, knights from France, Germany and Italy led by big feudal lords began to move towards the East by different routes. They had plenty of money and were well armed. The feudal lords brought with them servants and jesters, hunting dogs and falcons. Coming together in the Byzantine capital, the crusaders crossed over to Asia Minor. Their passage across the mountainous and arid areas of that country was very arduous. The crusaders were constantly harassed by raids of the Muslims' light cavalry.

But "the liberators of the Holy Sepulchre" were in no great hurry to reach their destination. On their way they conquered cities, and robbed and killed local inhabitants. Conflicts often flared up among leaders as to how to divide the booty.

After a three-year campaign, only one-fifth of the crusaders reached Jerusalem. Many died on the way, some settled in conquered territories, quite a few returned home.

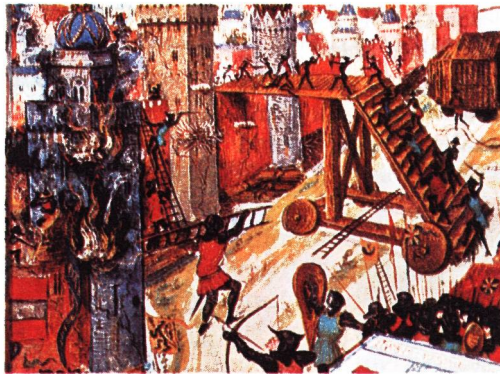
In 1099, the crusaders stormed and took Jerusalem. Once



The Crusades.
Stained glass, Saint-Denis Cathedral,
France (13th century)
Top, the crusaders fighting Seljuk
Turks, bottom, crusaders putting the
Muslims to flight

within the city walls, they massacred a great number of Muslims, sparing neither women nor children. Having stormed a house, the knight would put his shield on the door as a sign to the others that the house with everything inside was his property. Plunder and killings were interrupted only by prayers, after which the bloodshed continued.

5. *Crusader States*. On the narrow strip of land along the coast of Syria and the Palestine, the crusaders set up their states. The chief one among these was *the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. The rulers of the other crusader territories were the vassals of the king of Jerusalem.



The crusaders storming Jerusalem. 15th-century miniature

The siege of the fortified city dragged on for a month. Only after Genoan merchants brought siege machinery by sea, the storming began. After several hours of fierce combat, the city fell.

The peasants of the conquered countries, who by that time still retained personal freedom, were forced into serfdom by the crusaders. The new masters collected up to one-third or even half of their grain harvest, fruit, olives and grapes. In addition, the conquered population was obliged to pay high taxes to the king and the tithe to the Catholic Church.

To the peoples of the conquered countries, West European feudal lords brought increased feudal oppression.

- ? 1. Why did West European nobility and the Catholic Church seek in the late 11th century to conquer countries of the East? 2. On the map, trace the routes along which the crusaders moved to the East. Compare the descriptions of the peasants' and the noblemen's campaigns. What was the purpose of each of these campaigns? 3. What sort of order was established by the crusaders in the conquered countries?

§ 23. Subsequent Crusades and Their Consequences

(Map No. 7)

1. *Peoples of the East Struggle Against the Crusaders.* The inhabitants of the regions conquered by the crusaders hated their oppressors and rebelled against them more than once. The crusaders felt insecure in the strange and hostile country. The fortresses they had built rose like rocks amidst the desert. From them, the knights undertook raids against the Muslims, and hid there during rebellions.

The crusaders' states were at odds with one another, and this sapped their strength. From the east and the south, there was pressure from the Muslim principalities. To repel their attacks, the crusaders undertook the Second Crusade, which was a dismal failure. Soon the Muslims built a strong state headed by *Saladin*, the sultan of Egypt. He routed the crusader army and drove it out of Jerusalem.

In an attempt to win the Holy City back, West European nobility launched the Third Crusade. This time, their troops were headed by the kings of England, France and Germany.

2. *The Fourth Crusade.* In the late 12th century, Pope Innocent III called the nobility of Europe to a new Crusade. To avoid the difficulties of travel across land, the crusaders decided to reach Palestine by sea. They hired vessels from Venice.

At that time, Venice was waging a fierce struggle with the Byzantine Empire for supremacy in Mediterranean trade. Venetian merchants had long dreamed of dealing Byzantium a



The Craque Castle,
Syria (late 12th century)

blow from which it would never recover. They decided to make use of the crusaders' military might. The cunning and calculating ruler of Venice induced the knights to attack Byzantium. Thus, "the liberators of the Holy Sepulchre" found themselves at the walls of Constantinople, a Christian city.

In 1204, the crusaders stormed the Byzantine capital. Having forced their way into the city, they began to plunder and destroy palaces and cathedrals, merchants' warehouses and the homes of townspeople. Fires destroyed depositories of antique manuscripts. The "Western barbarians" pillaged the church of St. Sophia. Precious paintings and sculptures, preserved in Constantinople for centuries, were destroyed. Bishops and other clergy, who had come with the crusaders, took part in the plunder.

Crusaders enter Constantinople. Modern painting



The Fourth Crusade revealed the aggressive and predatory nature of the Crusades with particular clarity.

Having plundered the richest city in Europe, the knights did not move on to Jerusalem and settled in Byzantine territory instead. The local population never ceased fighting against the invaders.

In the west of the Balkan Peninsula and in Asia Minor, independent Byzantine states were formed. For over 50 years they put up staunch resistance to Western noblemen and in 1261 drove them away from Constantinople.

3. *The Last Crusades.* Gradually, the crusaders lost more and more of their possessions in Palestine.

The popes and kings organised new Crusades, but could not get enough men to take part in them. With the development of agriculture, the feudal lords received more profit from their peasants; besides, the wars against the Muslims were too



Crusaders besiege a Muslim fortress.
Drawing inside a capital letter of a manuscript

difficult and dangerous. The peasants no longer looked for freedom in far-away lands but fought with greater determination against their masters.

The Pope introduced a new tax to raise money for Crusades, but it had to be collected by force. Often, a man would give some money to a beggar right in front of the tax collector, saying: "Take this in the name of Mohammed, who is stronger than Christ!"

Shortly after the Eighth (and last) Crusade, which took place in the late 13th century, the Western feudal lords lost all their possessions in the Muslim countries.

The Crusades, wars of conquest against the East which continued from the late 11th until the late 13th century, were over.

4. The Consequences of the Crusades. We have already seen how much misery the Crusades brought to the peoples of the East. As for the Europeans, they had to pay a dear price for these campaigns, and still failed to conquer the countries in the East.

Still, the Crusades left their trace in the life of West European peoples. Mediterranean trade grew even more brisk. The leading role in this area passed to the ports of northern Italy. After Byzantium was defeated in 1204, it was no longer able to compete with Venice and Genoa. Italian merchants occupied whole blocks of houses in Syrian and Palestinian ports; they also built trade settlements on the Black Sea coast.

Living in Eastern countries and conducting trade with them, the Europeans learned about new crops. Rice, lemons, apricots and watermelons were now grown in Europe, too. The Europeans also learned to make silk fabrics and mirrors, and

improved their metalworking skills. Westerners began to wash their hands before meals and take hot baths.

Becoming acquainted with the ways of the wealthy East, the feudal lords of Western Europe acquired an even stronger taste for luxuries such as beautiful clothes, gourmet food and expensive weapons. To be able to afford all this, they began to drive their peasants even harder than before.

- ? 1. Why did the crusaders fail to keep their acquisitions in the East? 2. Prove that the Fourth Crusade revealed the real aims of the crusaders with particular clarity. 3. Why were the Crusades stopped? 4. How did the Crusades affect the peoples of the East and of Western Europe? How did the daily life of feudal lords change by the 14th century?

CHAPTER 6

THE FORMATION OF CENTRALISED STATES IN WESTERN EUROPE

With the growth of cities and expansion of trade, relations between the feudal nobility and the peasants underwent a change, and the class struggle grew more acute. This produced changes in the structure of the state: feudal fragmentation was overcome and centralised strong monarchies emerged.

§ 24. The Causes of the Unification of France

(Map No. 8)

1. *The Weakness of Monarchy in the 11th Century.* In the 11th century, France remained a fragmented state. Royal authority did not extend throughout the entire country. The

What rights did the feudal lords have on their estates in the 9th-10th centuries?

What advances were made by agriculture and the crafts in the 10th-11th centuries?



Dinner at a nobleman's castle. *Miniature (France, 15th century)*

king's land possessions were quite small, lying in northeastern France and including *Paris* on the river *Seine* and *Orléans* on the *Loire*.

But the king was not even master of his own lands: recalcitrant vassals built their castles there. As a contemporary put it, the inhabitants of these wasps' nests devoured the country by their brigandage with complete impunity. The king himself ventured to go from one of his towns to another only accompanied by an armed retinue.

The king did not pass laws which were mandatory for the whole of the country. Neither did he collect taxes from the population. For this reason, the king had neither a regular army nor a body of officials. Managers of his estates tried people in the name of the king.

2. *What Made the Unification of the Country Possible.* In 10th- and 11th-century France, as everywhere else in Europe, the crafts and agriculture were making good headway; cities were growing, and commerce was expanding.

Gradually, the *division of labour between regions* advanced. *Flanders* was famous for its fabrics, which were made from wool bought in England. The farmers of *Normandy* bred horses, *Champagne* made linen fabrics. These goods were then taken to different parts of the country. Merchants brought their wares to *Champagne fairs* along the *Seine* and its tributaries. *Paris* was gradually becoming the main centre of the trades and commerce of northeastern France as a whole. *Due to the increasing division of labour, economic isolation of the regions disappeared: they were now bound by trade relations. This created the conditions for uniting the country.*

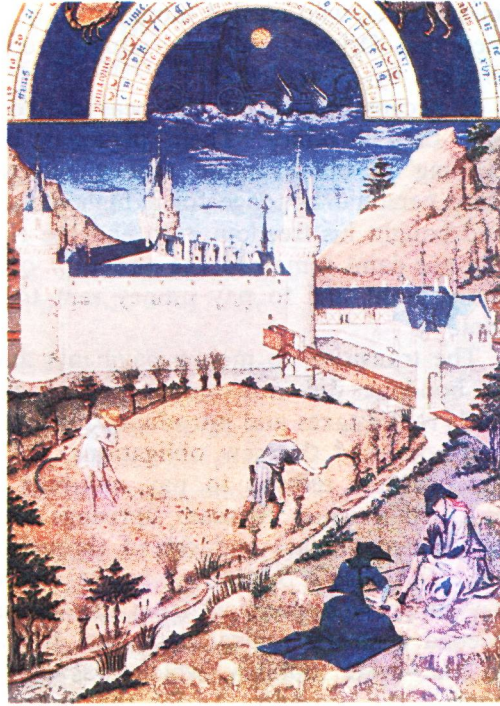
3. *Townspeople as Allies of the Monarchy.* Internecine wars and highway robberies did great damage to the economy, particularly trade. The merchants and craftsmen were interested in curbing the activities of despotic feudal lords. Order in the country could be established only by a strong royal authority.

The growing cities looked to the king for assistance in their struggle against their suzerains. Seeking to undermine the authority of his vassals, the king often took the side of the townspeople, who gladly supplied their protector with money and put armed units at his disposal whenever necessary.

The townspeople became the king's reliable allies in his struggle against the recalcitrant feudal high nobility.

4. *Peasants Are Set Free From Personal Bondage. Money Rent Is Introduced.* As farm peasants produced more and

What hampered the development of trade? How did cities struggle against their suzerains and what did they manage to achieve?



more it was to the advantage of the feudal lords to replace corvée, much hated by the peasants, by payments in the form of farm produce. Many suzerains divided their own cultivated land into plots and distributed them among the peasants for use.

As cities grew, peasants became involved in trade. They came to towns to sell surplus produce in the markets. The

Peasant labour. *Miniature (France, early 15th century)*

Illustration by the Limbourg brothers to the calendar of the Duke of Berry. The painters showed the peasants in their holiday clothes.



A spring outing. *Miniature (France, early 15th century)*

feudal lords, who needed money to buy articles made by craftsmen and Oriental wares, gradually replaced corvée and rent in kind by *money rent*.

It became easier for the peasants to dispose of their time and their produce. Their personal bondage grew weaker. Seeking to obtain more money, suzerains set peasants free from personal bondage for a high quit-rent. The peasant who had bought his freedom even had the right to leave the estate. But the land remained the property of the feudal lords, and the peasant had to pay money rent to his lord for using the plot.

The transition to money payments and abolition of personal bondage did not reduce feudal exploitation. As feudal lords raised taxes and introduced more duties, peasants increasingly opposed the new obligations. In a number of localities the peasants refused to pay quit-rent and high money rent and fled to cities. Peasant uprisings were no longer confined to isolated villages and spread throughout vast regions.

5. *The King's Supporters in the Unification of the Country.* To suppress opposition from the peasants, the feudal class needed a strong central authority. It was especially necessary to the lesser nobility which was not powerful enough to control the peasants. As for the dukes and counts, they had no wish to lose their independence and opposed the strengthening of the monarchy.

In his struggle against the recalcitrant noblemen, the king was supported by the knights. In turn, the latter looked to the king for protection against oppression by their suzerains. Many knights became the king's direct vassals: they entered his service, joining his army. Serving the king, a knight was able to obtain more money and honours.

Supported by the cities and the lesser nobility, the king began to unite the country under his authority.

How did the growth of cities affect labour productivity in agriculture?

What were the features of the serfs' personal dependence?

What were the goals of the peasants' struggle in the Early Middle Ages, and what methods did the peasants use? How did the feudal lords suppress peasant opposition?

- ? 1. What changes in the French economy paved the way for the country's unification? 2. How did the methods of exploiting the peasants change with the growth of cities? Why were peasants released from personal bondage? 3. Which sections of the population wanted the unification of the country, and why? 4. Resolve the contradiction: the peasants were set free from personal bondage, but the class struggle grew more acute.

§ 25. The Struggle for the Unification of France. Consolidation of the Monarchy in the 13th-Early 14th Centuries

1. The Unification Begins. The intersections of major trade routes were on royal lands; the kings levied duties on merchants and quickly grew richer.

Initially, a king forced his own vassals into submission, and then went on to subordinate big feudal lords who were independent rulers of large regions.

The French king's most formidable adversary was the king of England. As far back as the mid-11th century, the powerful Duke of Normandy conquered England and became its king. His successors expanded their possessions in France to such an extent that over a half of the French territory was under their control.

A prolonged war flared up between the king of England and the king of France over this territory. In the early 13th century, the French king, supported by the townspeople, took Normandy, and then nearly all of his other possessions except the duchy of *Aquitaine*, away from his enemy.

The French king also extended his rule to the county of *Toulouse* in the country's south, and subsequently to the rich *Champagne*. By the beginning of the 14th century, the larger part of French territory was united. The king's authority embraced almost the whole of France.

The country's regions were now governed by officials appointed by the king. In the lands belonging to the king, internecine wars were forbidden. In the rest of France, the feudal lords had no right to initiate hostilities until 40 days had passed after war had been declared, during which time the weaker side had a chance to submit a complaint to the royal court.

The king struck a new coin which was to be accepted everywhere, making trade much easier.

France was gradually becoming a centralised state; a centralised authority controlled the entire territory of the country.

2. The Estates in France. After the country's unification, the entire populace became the subjects of the king. It was divided into three estates.

An estate was a large group of people with the same rights and obligations passed on to succeeding generations.

The first estate was the clergy. Its duty was to pray and

to plead for sinners before God. All feudal lords other than those from the clergy made up the *second estate*, the *nobility*. The duty of the nobility was to go to war, defending the king and his subjects from the enemy. The clergy and the nobility had a number of *privileges*, rights which only they enjoyed. They did not have to pay taxes to the king.

The rest of the population constituted the *third estate*. Its duty was to work so as to support the two higher estates. Wealthy townspeople held a leading position in the third estate. The king often summoned them to the sessions of the royal council: they could always be relied upon for money and sound advice.

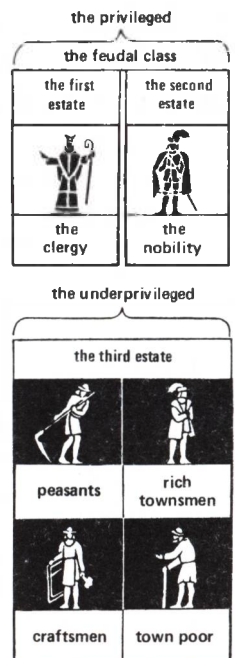
The division into estates does not coincide with the division into classes: the higher clergy and the nobility together formed the class of feudal lords, while the third estate included the class of peasants and various sections of the urban population.

3. *Consolidation of the Monarchy.* By the early 14th century, the greater part of France was united under the king. An energetic and cruel ruler, king *Philip IV (the Fair)* (1285-1314) steadily added to the royal possessions. He annexed Champagne, a rich province, and *Navarre* in the south of the country.

The king needed a great deal of money to pay his officials wages and to fight wars. To obtain that money, Philip IV introduced a tax on church lands. The Pope threatened him with excommunication and demanded total submission to his authority. The king sent an envoy to Italy who incited Roman feudal lords to rise against the Pope. Bringing a unit of mercenaries, the envoy forced his way into the castle and showered the Pope with abuse. The Pope could not bear the humiliation and died soon afterwards. With the consolidation of the monarchy, papal influence in the European countries grew weaker.

4. *The Estates General.* The Estates General was first convened in 1302 by Philip IV, who wished to secure support of the social estates against the Pope. This was an assembly of representatives of the clergy, the nobility and the rich townspeople. Since that time, the Estates General was convened each time a king wanted to introduce a new tax. The burden of the taxes was shouldered by the peasants and the craftsmen.

The representatives of the clergy, the nobility and the townspeople held separate meetings and came together only to pass final decisions. When taxes were discussed, arguments frequently flared up between the feudal lords and the towns-



The three estates in France



Philip IV's coin



Philip IV's seal



The Estates General
in session. 16th-
century engraving

people, as the clergy and the nobility refused to pay taxes. As they had one vote against two, the wealthy townspeople were forced to give in.

Discord among the estates weakened the influence of the Estates General on state affairs.

In the early 14th century, a limited monarchy emerged in France—a centralised feudal state in which the king relied for support on an assembly of estate representatives. That was the first stage in the development of the centralised state; the monarchy was not yet strong enough to rule the country without the support of the estates.

? 1. How did the growth of cities and expansion of trade help prepare the way for the unification of France? Who and why was interested in its unification and the consolidation of the monarchy? 2. Using the map, compare the possessions of the French kings in the 11th and in the early

14th centuries. Which regions were added to the king's lands? 3. Give reasons to show that the French monarchy was stronger by the beginning of the 14th century than in the 11th century. How did the Estates General help to consolidate it?

§ 26. The Beginning of the Hundred Years' War. The Jacquerie

(Map No. 9)

1. Causes of the War and Casus Belli. In the 14th century, a protracted war between England and France was begun. With a few interruptions, it lasted for over a hundred years, and is known as the *Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)*.

Why did the war begin? The English kings wanted to win back their French possessions. The long-standing feud between French and English kings was intensified due to their rivalry over Flanders with its rich cities. The French kings had repeatedly tried to add Flanders to their territory, but were repelled by the Flemish townspeople. And Flanders was supported by England: the two countries had long had close trade relations.

The king of England was a relative of the French king. On the pretext that after the death of the king of France there was no direct heir, he claimed the French throne. This was the *casus belli* (an excuse to begin a war).

2. *The French Feudal Lords Are Defeated.* The French army was mostly made up of cavalry. The knights were undisciplined and sought only to display personal valour. The infantry was mostly comprised of foreign mercenaries, whom the knights despised. The English army was better organised than the French. Apart from the cavalry, the British had a numerous and disciplined infantry. It was comprised of free peasants, a population group which still existed in England. The infantry used large long bows and could shoot from a distance of 600 paces. At 200 paces the shots were highly accurate, the arrows piercing knights' armour.

The English used their navy to cross the *English Channel* and invaded France. From the start the French suffered one setback after another, and the English captured Normandy.

In 1346 the French army was defeated in the battle of *Crécy* in northeastern France.

Then the English army launched an offensive from Aquitaine. In 1356, a battle took place at the town of *Poitiers* south of the Loire. The French army outnumbered the English, but its action was uncoordinated. Pushing forward, the knights broke

The battle of Crécy.
15th-century miniature

Naval battle during
the Hundred Years'
War. 14th-century
miniature



ranks and only got in one another's way. Under the shower of arrows, the French cavalry was disoriented, and the army was destroyed. The highest nobles and the king himself were taken prisoner.

After the battle of Poitiers, the position of France became very difficult. The north and the south of the country were in the hands of the invaders.

3. *The Plight of the Common People.* Even before the war, as the towns grew and trade expanded, feudal oppression in France was growing worse.

The war brought new suffering to the toiling people of France. The troops, both French and English, devastated the country. After the defeat at Poitiers, the mercenaries scattered all over France. They attacked defenceless villages and tortured the peasants, extorting money. Robbers razed villages to the ground. The people were fully justified in blaming the feudal nobility for their misfortunes.

The peasants were impoverished but the feudal lords demanded more and more money, saying, "Jacques the simpleton has a broad back which can bear anything". They made the common name Jacques sound pejorative as a nickname for a peasant.

4. *The Jacquerie.* In May 1358, a peasant uprising known as the *Jacquerie* began in northeastern France. It was *spontaneous*: there had been no preparations, and the peasants had no plan of action. But the insurgents knew who their enemies were—the feudal lords. The peasants' hatred for their oppressors was so strong that they threatened to kill all noblemen to the last one. Armed with whatever they happened to lay their hands on, the peasants killed feudal lords and destroyed their castles.

The uprising was headed by *Guillaume Caillet*, a peasant. A chronicler describes Caillet as a man of experience who was an eloquent speaker and was well-built and handsome. Caillet attempted to unite the peasants. But, living in isolated communities, they were reluctant to join forces with insurgents from other villages. In most cases they only rose up against their own masters and refused to leave their neighbourhood.

The town poor were ready to support the peasants, but the wealthy townspeople closed the city gates to peasant units.

The feudal lords fled from the areas enveloped by the uprising, but soon overcame their confusion and amassed a large force. English troops were willing to help the French nobility, as the French and English feudal lords equally hated



Soldiers of the time of the Hundred Years' War: a soldier with a crossbow; an infantryman. A crossbow is an iron bow with a butt, which has a mechanism for drawing the bow.

the insurgent peasants.

On the eve of the decisive battle, Guillaume Caillet deployed his troops on a hill. The nobles saw that the peasants were ready to put up a resistance and decided to trick them. They invited the peasant leader for talks. Unsuspicious, Caillet came to the enemy camp, where he was seized and put in chains.



Massacre of rebels in the town of Meaux. 15th-century miniature

Having seized the bridge on the Marne, the feudal knights smash the poorly armed peasants and drown them in the river.

Then the knights attacked the peasants' camp. Deprived of their leader, the peasants were beaten. Before executing Caillet, the feudal lords put a red-hot iron hoop on his head; they said it was a crown for the peasant king.

The feudal lords took cruel revenge on the participants in the uprising. They burned down villages, set fire to the peasants' crops, and hanged peasants on trees and on the doors of their huts. Many regions in the north of France were left completely deserted.

Although the Jacquerie ended in defeat, it had important consequences. Even before the war, many feudal lords in France had set their peasants free from bondage for a large sum of money. Frightened by the great uprising, many other lords hastened to do the same.

Despite the fact that land remained the property of the feudal lords, which meant that feudal oppression continued, *after the uprising the peasants secured better conditions for work on their own farms.*

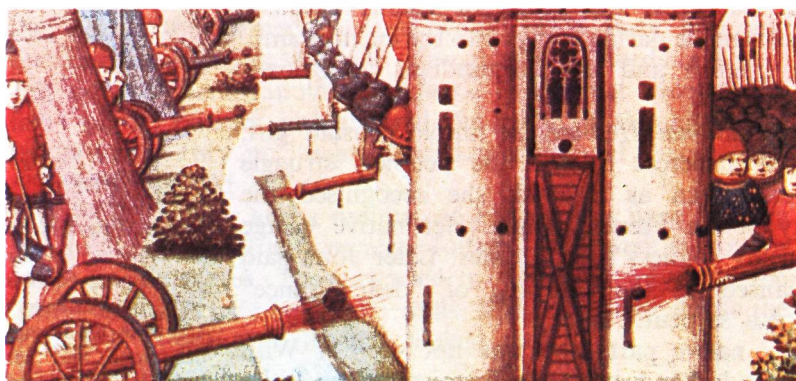
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1. Explain the causes of and the pre-text for the Hundred Years' War. Why did the French nobility suffer defeats in the war with England? Give examples.
2. What do you think was the main cause of the peasant uprising?
3. Why did the uprising fail?

§ 27. The Struggle of the French People Against the Invaders. Joan of Arc

(Map No. 9)

1. *English Conquests in the Early 15th Century.* In 1360, France concluded a peace treaty with England. Having gained a respite, the French king hired more mercenaries and began to build a navy. He also strengthened his artillery. Heavy cannons, which first appeared in Europe during the Hundred Years' War, were used to storm fortresses.



A city under cannon
fire. 15th-century
miniature



The French resumed hostilities and made good headway. The English held on to only a few towns on the western coast of France. But the successes of the French were temporary. Soon there was discord among France's big feudal lords. The English capitalised on the situation and went on the offensive. In 1415, a decisive battle was fought near the town of *Azincourt*. The French knights were routed, and the English occupied the entire northern part of the country.

One of the most powerful French feudal lords, the *Duke of Burgundy*, openly sided with the English. He owned large territories in the east and north of France, and the whole of the *Netherlands*. Traitors among the feudal nobility allowed the English to take Paris.

The remnants of the French army entrenched themselves in the castles along the Loire, with the city of Orléans as their stronghold. The English besieged the city. The future of France was decided at Orléans: its fall would have opened the

Guns of the time of the Hundred Years' War. Initially, the barrels were made from iron strips welded together lengthwise and bound by metal hoops; later, the barrels were cast in special molds. Stone (later cast iron) cannon balls were rolled into the barrel. Gunpowder was ignited with the help of a wick through a narrow groove in the barrel.

way to the southern part of the country for the invaders.

2. *The People Take Up Arms.* The French army had lost the will to win. The king and the nobility were confused and passive. Though times were difficult, the French people rallied and showed a determination to go on fighting. The peasants not only rebuffed attacks on villages by pillaging enemy soldiers but, uniting into detachments, staged ambushes and killed many invaders. A *guerilla war* was being waged in the country.

Two hundred days had already passed since the beginning of the siege of Orléans. Its inhabitants put up a heroic resistance. From distant quarries, they brought pieces of rock to be used as cannonballs, and made weapons. During attacks on the city, the whole population fought on its walls. Women poured boiling oil and threw hot coals on the heads of enemy soldiers. Armed units of citizens made daring forays into the enemy camp. The forces of the English and the Burgundians at Orléans were diminishing.

3. *Joan of Arc, a National Heroine.* A simple peasant girl, *Joan of Arc*, played a heroic role in the people's struggle against the invaders. Even as a child, she recognised the misery and poverty of the French people. Her native village was attacked by enemy soldiers several times. Later Joan said that the misery caused by the suffering of "dear France" stung her heart like a serpent.

When she left her native parts she was not yet 18. With great difficulty, she made her way to the fortress on the Loire where the king was staying and managed to secure an audience with him. The courtiers realised that her enthusiasm and profound faith in victory could raise the morale of the troops. She was given a unit of knights which she led to the besieged Orléans. On her way, the peasant girl was warmly welcomed by



Joan of Arc. 15th-century miniature

Joan of Arc in combat. *Modern painting.* Joan was the first to put up a ladder against the fortress wall. Hit by an enemy arrow in the shoulder, Joan had her wound bandaged and returned to the battlefield; together with other soldiers she climbed the fortress wall and put up a banner there.



the common people. In one of the towns, craftsmen presented her with armour and travelling clothes.

With Joan to lead them, the people of Orléans took determined action against the enemy. She herself displayed courage and resourcefulness in the fiercest battles. Her example inspired the soldiers. Nine days later, the siege was raised; the English and the Burgundians retreated to the north.

With Joan's participation, large areas of French territory were liberated. The year 1429 when the siege of Orléans was raised became the turning point in the war. Joan's fame spread to the remotest corners of France.

4. *The Death of Joan of Arc.* A great number of volunteers wanted to fight together with Joan in the army. But the nobility did not want the common people to participate in the war: they feared that armed peasants would drive away not only the English invaders but the French feudal lords as well. The nobility feared another Jacquerie. The great success and fame of the peasant girl aroused the envy of the high-born feudal lords. They no longer needed the national heroine and decided to get rid of her.

Once when Joan and a number of her soldiers were fighting the Burgundians at the *Compiègne* fortress, they were surrounded by enemy forces. The girl tried to fight her way into the fortress so as to hide behind its walls. But the bridge across the moat was raised, and the gate locked.



The capture of Joan of Arc. *Bas-relief in the Domrémy Cathedral*

The Burgundians captured Joan and handed her over to the English in exchange for a large sum of money. The king for whom she had done so much did not even try to ransom her.

The English decided to slander the French heroine: Joan was

declared a witch—a horrible accusation at the time. She had to spend many months in prison, where she was kept in an iron cage with chains on her neck and feet. Joan was tried by French bishops who had sold out to the enemy. The learned judges did their best to confuse and intimidate the illiterate girl. But Joan answered all questions sensibly and with dignity. She was sentenced to a horrible death: in May 1431 Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in the town of *Rouen*.

5. *The End of the War.* After Joan's death, the popular war acquired new strength. In Normandy, a 12,000-strong army fought with great success against the invaders. Armed with poles and pitchforks, the people launched surprise attacks against the enemy. In Paris, an uprising began against the invaders. The French capital was liberated and the French army chased the English out of the country.

In 1453, the English king pleaded for a peace treaty. Under its terms, the English retained only the port of *Calais* on French soil.

Thanks to the heroism displayed by the people, France was saved from enslavement by the foreign invaders.



A monument to Joan of Arc

- ?
1. Explain why in the late 14th century the French made good headway in the war against the English, while in the early 15th century they suffered defeats?
 2. On the map, find the areas captured by the English after 1415.
 3. What was the heroic feat performed by Joan of Arc? Why was she so successful? Why did the king and the nobility betray her?
 4. Do you think that the Hundred Years' War was a just war for France at the outset? And in the end? Have there been any just wars?

§ 28. The Final Unification of France at the End of the 15th Century

1. *France after the Hundred Years' War.* The war did great damage to the French economy. The fields were overgrown with weeds, hundreds of villages had been burned down, towns were deserted, trade was sluggish. But the peasants and craftsmen soon set the economy in motion again. The lands abandoned during the war were tilled, and the production of iron and fabrics began to grow. Trade contacts expanded: olive oil and wine were brought to the north from the south, and linen, woollen fabrics, iron and salt were shipped south from the

north. The people's labour created the conditions for the final unification of France.

The monarchy became stronger as a result of the war. As before, the king was supported by the townspeople and the knights.

2. *The King's Struggle Against the Recalcitrant Feudal Lords.* During the war, the feudal nobility had seized large territories formerly belonging to the king. The dukes and counts wanted to divide the whole country among themselves making France fragmented.

Royal court. *Miniature by Jean Fouquet (France, 15th century)*

Louis XI and courtiers receive ambassadors. *15th-century miniature*



During the reign of *Louis XI* (1461-1483), big feudal lords formed a secret alliance. The instigator of their plot was *Charles the Bold*, Duke of Burgundy, a wealthy feudal lord. He fought incessantly with his neighbours, captured their lands and drove away their peasants. Contemporaries nicknamed him "the wolf". Charles the Bold mockingly said that he loved France so much that he preferred it to have six rulers instead of one.

Louis XI was unscrupulous in the struggle against his dangerous adversaries. More than once he deceived them and went back on his word. Cunning and stingy, he nevertheless spent money lavishly if he could bribe his powerful enemies. When there was something to be gained by it, he flattered the



Louis XI. *15th-century engraving*

people whom he hated and feared. Louis XI, whose nickname was "the fox", used to say that a person who could not pretend could not rule.

The struggle between Louis XI and Charles the Bold continued for twelve years. In open combat, the king was defeated and forced to sign a humiliating peace. Then he decided to turn Charles's neighbours against him. Fighting them, Charles the Bold was killed. Having eliminated his principal adversary, the king then got rid of all the others one by one. For years, he held the enemies he had captured in iron cages where there was not enough space for the prisoners even to stand up. The king dreaded assassination attempts. For many years, he lived in a secluded castle which stood in the midst of a thick wood. The castle was carefully guarded by a large force.

Most of the Duke of Burgundy's lands were now in the possession of the king. Among these was a region in the south with the city of *Marseilles*, which became the chief French port in the Mediterranean. Only the duchy of *Brittany* in the northwest of the country remained independent and was included into France only under Louis XI's successor.

By the late 15th century, the unification of France had been completed.

3. *France as a Centralised State.* The unification of France proceeded alongside the consolidation of the monarchy.

As far back as the last period of the Hundred Years' War, the king replaced the undisciplined detachments of his vassals by a *standing army* consisting of knights and mercenaries. To maintain the king's army, a special *annual tax* was introduced.

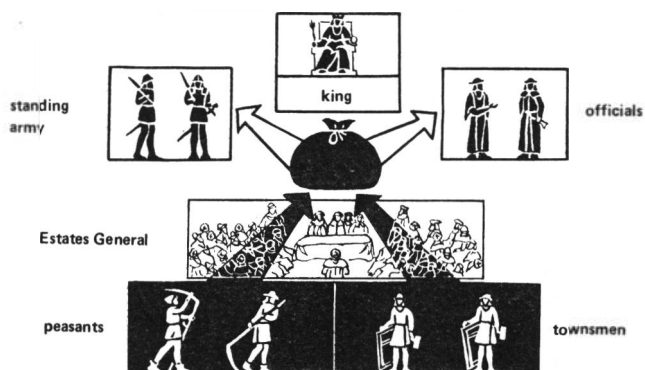
The majority of the dukes and counts retained their lands but lost their independence. Now the king settled all state matters as he deemed necessary, including the declaration of war and the conclusion of peace. Louis XI said jokingly that he carried all the advisers he needed in the saddle of his horse. He ruled the state with the help of officials who were in his service. Distrustful of the nobility, the king took rich practical-minded townsmen into his confidence. Having money and a standing army at his disposal, the king no longer needed the Estates General; Louis XI convened it only once.

By the end of the 15th century, from a country split into independent feudal territories France turned into a centralised state. The whole country was under a single centralised authority—the authority of the king.

4. *The Consequences of France's Unification.* The peasants



Charles the Bold.
Portrait by the Dutch painter Rogier van der Weyden (15th century)



The centralised state
in France, late 15th
century

and the town poor had to pay high taxes to the king. With the help of his army and officials, the king brutally suppressed peasant uprisings.

The strong authority of the king consolidated the rule of the class of feudal nobility.

When feudal fragmentation had ended, armies of warring feudal lords no longer trampled out the peasants' crops, and merchants were able to freely travel all over the country without fear of robbers.

The king encouraged the growth of cities and expansion of trade. He invited experienced Italian weavers, experts at making silk fabrics, to come to France. They settled in the city of *Lyons*, which ever since has been the centre of silk production in France. Fairs were held there, which attracted merchants from other European countries.

France now had a large merchant marine. Supported by the king, French merchants secured favourable terms in foreign trade.

Previously, the inhabitants of southern France did not consider themselves Frenchmen and could not understand the language spoken in the north of France. By the end of the 15th century, a common *French language* had begun to evolve.

The transformation of France into a centralised state promoted the development of its economy and culture.

?

1. Explain why did Louis XI win in the struggle for the unification of France in the late 15th century.
2. What was the difference between the monarchy in the late 15th century and the monarchy in the 11th

- century? 3. Give definitions of a fragmented feudal state and of a centralised state. 4. Whose interests did Louis XI's activities advance, and what was their significance for the country?

§ 29. The Formation of a Centralised State in England

(Map No. 9)

1. *The Norman Conquest.* After Britain was conquered by the Anglo-Saxons, a number of warring kingdoms were formed on its territory. In the 9th century, these united into the kingdom of *England*. The feudal system was established in the country, but many peasants remained free. The king's authority was weak.

In 1066, England was conquered by William, Duke of Normandy. Not only the Duke's vassals but knights from other parts of France took part in the conquest.



The Norman Conquest. Embroidery on carpet (France, 11th century)

Top, William's knights on sailships crossing over to England; bottom, the battle between the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons

In large sailboats, the Duke's force crossed *the English Channel* and landed on the south coast of England. Here a battle took place which decided the future of the country.

The big landowners in England did not join the king in the struggle against the invaders; free peasants made up the bulk of the Anglo-Saxon army. Armed with lances and axes, they entrenched themselves on a hill and repulsed enemy attacks for a whole day. But William feigned a retreat and lured the Anglo-Saxons into the valley. His cavalry surrounded the peasants, who fought on foot. The knights in steel armour trampled and chopped up the Anglo-Saxons. In the unequal battle the king and his small mounted retinue were killed.

The Duke of Normandy stormed London, the capital of England, and was crowned king under the name of *William the Conqueror*. Over the following years, the Anglo-Saxons

organised several uprisings against the Normans. Resistance to the invaders was particularly strong in the north of England, which was populated by free peasants. William's knights killed people and razed villages to the ground. After their raids, the northern regions of the country remained desolated for years.

2. *The Consequences of the Norman Conquest.* William the Conqueror deprived most local feudal lords of their lands and distributed them among his knights. To be able to keep the conquered country in submission, the new lords needed a strong king. Not only the higher but the lesser nobility as well gave an oath of allegiance to William. All feudal lords in England became his vassals. At his call, they embarked on military campaigns and paid him the agreed dues.

Using the right of the conqueror, William appropriated one-seventh of all English lands and became the largest landowner in the country. The king received huge income from his estates both in France and in England.

The Norman Conquest strengthened the authority of the king and initiated the formation of a centralised state in England.

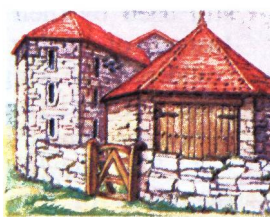
The feudal lords used the monarchy to enserf the peasants. William the Conqueror ordered that a census of all the lands and population of England be taken. Many peasants who had been free prior to the Conquest were listed as serfs. The new masters imposed a heavy corvée on the peasants and introduced a great number of other obligations. A large part of the forests was declared the king's hunting preserve. Those caught hunting there were blinded.

After the Norman Conquest, feudal oppression in England became worse.

3. *The Struggle of the King Against Big Feudal Lords.* When William the Conqueror's grandchildren came into power, the higher nobility plunged the country into a prolonged internecine war. Big feudal lords were fighting to win the independence equal to that enjoyed by the French dukes and counts.

But England had even more favourable conditions than France for strengthening royal authority. At the time of William the Conqueror, the country had about a hundred cities, while by the end of the 13th century the number had doubled. Both domestic and foreign trade were rapidly developing. The city of London was becoming a major trade centre of Northern Europe. The majority of English towns and cities stood on land belonging to the king. Although the king levied heavy taxes on them, the townspeople supported the monarchy, for they preferred to "have one tyrant rather than a hundred".

What rule determined the relationship between the suzerains and the vassals in France?



House of a feudal lord. England, the 13th century

What was the role of the cities in consolidating the monarchy in France?

English peasants never stopped fighting against feudal lords. Many ran away from their masters and hunted in the king's woods. They were called "free archers". The runaways united into groups and attacked feudal lords, bishops, royal officials and judges. The "free archers" were liked and supported by the peasants. Later, in the 14th century, folk songs, or *ballads*, were composed about their adventures and feats. The favourite hero of the ballads was *Robin Hood*, a merry and courageous man, a staunch friend of all the oppressed and the enemy of the rich.

The struggle of the peasants against feudal oppression made the lesser nobility seek the king's support. Assisted by the knights and the townspeople, the kings won the struggle against the big feudal lords.

In the 12th century, each free citizen of England was given the right to lodge a complaint directly in the royal court, bypassing the court of the local feudal lord. Only serfs were still tried by their masters. The king's army was strengthened. Instead of having to take part in all campaigns, the knights could pay the king a special tax—scutage. With this money the king recruited free peasants into his infantry, and maintained a cavalry consisting of knights.

4. *The Establishment of Parliament.* In the 13th century, the kings of England used their power to levy heavy dues on the feudal lords and to establish prohibitive taxes on towns. This aroused the hostility not only of the higher nobility but of the king's former allies—the knights and the townspeople. Sometimes the hostility resulted in fighting between the king and his vassals. The peasants used the discord to seize the lands of the feudal lords and destroy their estates. Frightened by peasant uprisings, the feudal lords hastened to make up

Why did the lesser nobility in France support the king in his struggle against the upper nobility?

The House of Lords and the House of Commons in session. 17th-century engravings



their differences.

In 1265, an assembly was convened in England for the first time, where big feudal lords as well as representatives of the knights and wealthy townspeople were present. This assembly came to be known as *Parliament* (from the French word *parler*—to speak).

In the 14th century, Parliament was divided into two chambers—the *House of Lords* (the higher nobility) and the *House of Commons*. In the House of Lords sat bishops, abbots and the more important noblemen invited by the king. To the House of Commons, two knights were elected from each county, and two citizens from each big city.

The discord between English knights and townsfolk was not as deep-going as in France. That is why they were able to get a law passed which stated that no tax would be levied without consent from the House of Commons. Approving a new tax, Parliament usually put its demands before the king and wrestled concessions from him. Gradually, Parliament began to take part in law-making. The English Parliament exercised greater influence on state affairs than the Estates General in France.

The 13th-14th centuries saw the establishment in England and France of centralised states in the form of a limited monarchy.

- ? 1. What were the two main results of the Norman Conquest? Support your answer with facts. 2. What happened earlier: the conquest of England by the Normans or the beginning of the Hundred Years' War? How much time passed between the establishment of Parliament in England and of the Estates General in France? 3. How did the structure and rights of the Estates General differ from those of the English Parliament? What did they have in common?

§ 30. The Uprising of Wat Tyler. The English Monarchy by the Early 16th Century

(Map No. 9)

1. *The Causes of the Uprising.* With the growth of cities, English feudal lords, just like the French, wanted to obtain more and more income from their estates. Instead of *corvée*

and rent in kind, they demanded that the peasants pay them money rent. To get it, the peasants had to go to towns to sell surplus produce. Many feudal lords, especially from among the lesser nobility, gave up *corvée* and accepted payment to set peasants free from personal bondage. To cultivate their lands, they hired impoverished peasants whose labour was very cheap.

In the mid-14th century, an epidemic of plague, called the Black Death, spread over Western Europe. The epidemic devastated England, killing a third of its population. The number of people ready to sell their labour decreased sharply; they demanded higher remuneration for their work. Big feudal lords who had many peasants went back to *corvée*. Less wealthy feudal lords and rich townspeople made Parliament pass laws which stipulated severe punishment for the poor people who refused to work for low wages. Those who did not adhere to these laws were sentenced to flogging, imprisonment or branding.

The king needed money to be able to continue the war against France, and the masses had to pay new taxes. A chronicler wrote that tax-collectors oppressed the people and inflicted injuries on them.

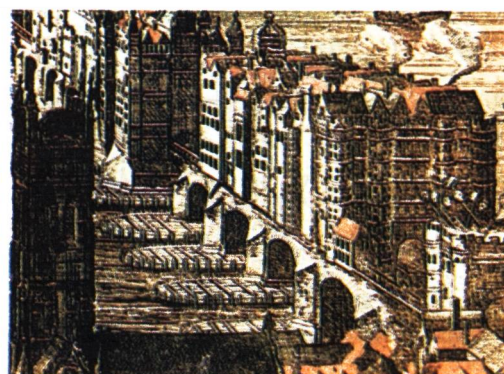
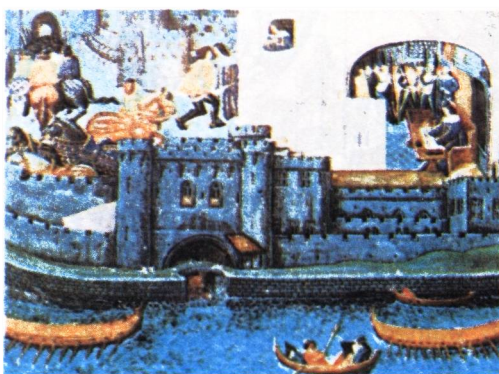
Increased exploitation by the feudal nobility, the harsh laws against the poor and higher taxes caused indignation among the people.

Itinerant preachers, who came from among the poor clergy, began to appear in England. In their sermons, they sharply criticised the venality of the king's judges, the greed of the bishops and the cruelty of the feudal lords. The preacher *John Ball* was particularly popular with the English common people. He asked his listeners: "When Adam delved

How did the growth of cities and the advancement of trade affect the condition of peasants in France?

London in the 15th century. *Miniature (c. 1500)*. The oldest picture of London shows part of the Tower (white) and of the city wall.

London bridge. *16th-century engraving*. On the bridge stood big stone houses, workshops and stores.



and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" In this way he showed that all people were equal and that land ought to belong to those who work it. More than once, Ball was thrown into prison. But he managed to smuggle out letters where he called on the peasants and the poor folk to begin an uprising.

2. *The Uprising Begins.* In May 1381, the peasants of a number of villages to the north of London threw out the tax collectors and the king's officials. This signalled the beginning of an uprising. Within a few days, it had spread over the greater part of the country.

Armed with axes, pitchforks and bows, the insurgents formed units and attacked feudal estates and monasteries. With particular zeal, they destroyed the documents which listed their duties, and the lists of taxpayers.

Wat Tyler, a village craftsman, assumed leadership in the uprising. This intelligent and brave man had taken part in the Hundred Years' War; knowledgeable in military matters, he tried to introduce order and discipline in his troops. The insurgents released John Ball from prison, and he became another leader of the uprising.

In the hope that the king would meet their demands and punish his "bad" counsellors, the peasants of the two counties nearest to London moved towards the capital. Thus, from the first days of the uprising the peasants' trust in the king was apparent.

3. *The Insurgents in London.* The London poor ignored the mayor's order and opened the city gate for the peasants. Upon entering the capital, the rebels began to destroy court buildings and the palaces of the hated counsellors to the king, and killed judges and officials. Prisoners were released,



A group of craftsmen in the street of a medieval town. Miniature (1400)

What triggered off the Jacquerie?

What were the goals pursued by the rebels during the Jacquerie?



The march of the insurgent peasants against London (15th-century miniature). John Ball, the leader of the rebels, urges the detachments to unite. The peasants are carrying the flag of the English kingdom thus proclaiming their faith in the King.

and the London poor set fire to the houses of rich merchants. Valuable objects were destroyed, thrown in the river or burned. A man who tried to conceal a piece of a silver dish under his clothes was thrown into a fire. The peasants said that they were defenders of truth and justice, not robbers or highwaymen.

The king and his counsellors hid in *the Tower*, a fortified London castle. The insurgents besieged the fortress and threatened to kill everyone inside it. The king, frightened, agreed to meet with the peasants. During the talks, the insurgents ceremoniously handed the king a list of demands. They insisted that not a single person should remain a serf and that the land should be let for low rent. The peasants demanded that *corvée* be abolished; they believed that no one had to be in service other than of his own free will.

The king promised to meet all the demands and pardon all the participants in the uprising. He did not intend to keep his word, but many peasants believed him and left London. Only the most determined insurgents headed by Wat Tyler stayed in the city. They managed to secure another meeting with the king, during which they gave him a list of additional demands: that the pastures and forests seized by the feudal lords be returned to the communities, that bishops' and church lands be divided among peasants and that all people in England be given equal rights.



The assassination of Wat Tyler. *Medieval drawing*

When Wat Tyler trustingly approached the king's retinue to present the peasants' demands, one of the courtiers struck a quarrel with him. When Wat Tyler unsheathed a dagger to get even with his offender, the Mayor of London slew him with his sword.

During the talks Wat Tyler was treacherously killed by the courtiers. Confusion set in among the peasants who had lost their leader. A detachment of knights and rich townspeople which lay in ambush came to the aid of the king. The king's counsellors persuaded the peasants to leave the city and promised to meet their demands.

4. *Causes of the Defeat and Consequences of the Uprising.*

After the insurgents had left London, the king assembled knights from all over England. Together with the mercenaries, they went in pursuit of the peasant units and destroyed them one by one. The perfidious king went back on his promises. The feudal lords dealt cruelly with the insurgents, John Ball was executed.

The English peasants had begun the uprising without preparation and their actions were not coordinated. The insurgents of only two counties took part in the London campaign. The peasants did not understand that their enemy was the entire class of the feudal nobility with the king at its head. The insurgents were too credulous, naively expecting support from the king. In routing the peasants, the king and the feudal lords were assisted by rich London townspeople who were frightened by the town poor's participation in the uprising.

As distinct from the French peasants who took part in the Jacquerie, the English peasants set forth a number of definite demands. But their action lacked coordination and unity.

The feudal lords had a good chance to see how formidable a force the insurgent people were. After 1381 they no longer demanded corvée and were forced to make the legislation affecting the peasants less harsh. In the course of the 15th century, nearly all English peasants bought personal freedom. For the use of land plots, they paid the estate owners fixed rent.

5. *The Beginnings of the Tudor Dynasty.* Soon after the Hundred Years' War had ended, a war began inside England which lasted for thirty years (1455-1485). The feudal nobility was split into two hostile camps, each supporting one of two aristocratic families who were fighting for the throne. As the coat of arms of one had a white rose, and that of the other—a red rose, the war came to be known as *the War of the Roses*. Depending on who was on top in the struggle, many feudal lords changed sides more than once. The war was waged with great ruthlessness: the relatives of those killed took vengeance on the families of their enemies and did not even spare children. The war was over only when nearly all the noble feudal lords were killed. In the end, the winner was *Henry Tudor*, a relative of one of the families. Crowned as Henry VII, he founded the Tudor Dynasty.

Henry VII (1485-1509) ordered the noblemen to disband their troops and used artillery to destroy the castles of those who refused to obey. He ordered that some of the recalcitrant

Compare the causes of defeat of the peasant uprisings in England and in France in the 14th century.

What was there in common between the consequences of the peasant uprisings in England and in France?

feudal lords be executed and appropriated their lands.

During Henry VII's reign, Parliament continued to convene. Following the death of many barons, the king appointed trusted nobles to the House of Lords. The knights and townspeople who sat in the House of Commons obediently approved the bills put forth by the king and allowed him to introduce new taxes.

In the late 15th and early 16th century, the king's authority in England was strengthened considerably.

- ?
1. Compare the causes of the uprisings in England and in France. Which uprising was better organised? Explain why Wat Tyler's uprising was spontaneous.
 2. Compare the demands set forth by the English peasants during the first and the second meetings with the king. Which do you consider more far-reaching? Why?
 3. What similar actions were taken by the peasants during the Jacquerie and the uprising led by Wat Tyler? What similar actions were taken by the feudal lords? Explain the reasons.
 4. What do you see in common between the activities of Louis XI and Henry VII? Give your reasons.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 6

By the late 15th century, centralised states had emerged not only in France and England but in other European countries as well.

For hundreds of years the local population in the Iberian Peninsula waged a persistent struggle against the invaders, gradually driving them south. In the course of the *reconquista* (which means "reconquest" in Spanish), a number of independent states appeared on the Iberian Peninsula. The *Kingdom of Portugal* was formed in the 13th century, and in the end of the 15th century, other states united to form the *Kingdom of Spain*. The Arabs were forced to withdraw from the peninsula altogether. Spain became a centralised state with a strong monarchy.

In the late 15th century, most Russian territories united around Moscow, forming a single centralised *Russian state*.

Centralised states were stronger than fragmented ones. They successfully defended themselves from foreign invasions. A united country offered more favourable conditions for economic development. The strong power of the king ensured law

and order: internecine wars subsided and highway robberies gradually stopped.

Culture also had a better chance of advancement in centralised states, and national languages spoken by entire countries began to evolve. Formerly, the people living in the south of France did not consider themselves Frenchmen. They had difficulty understanding the language spoken in the north. By the late 15th century, with the country united, a national French language had begun to evolve. In England after the Norman Conquest, the local population continued to use the Anglo-Saxon language, while French was the language of the feudal lords who had invaded the country. A common English language took several centuries to evolve.

However, by the end of the 15th century there were countries in Europe where centralised states had not been formed. Germany, for one, remained fragmented; it was part of the vast but weak Holy Roman Empire. Cities were growing there just as in the other countries, but not one was important enough to become the country's centre as had Paris in France and London in England. Trade relations between parts of Germany were very weak. For this reason, the townspeople there were not as interested in creating a single centralised state as in France or England. Germany consisted of a multitude of states headed by big feudal lords—*princes*.

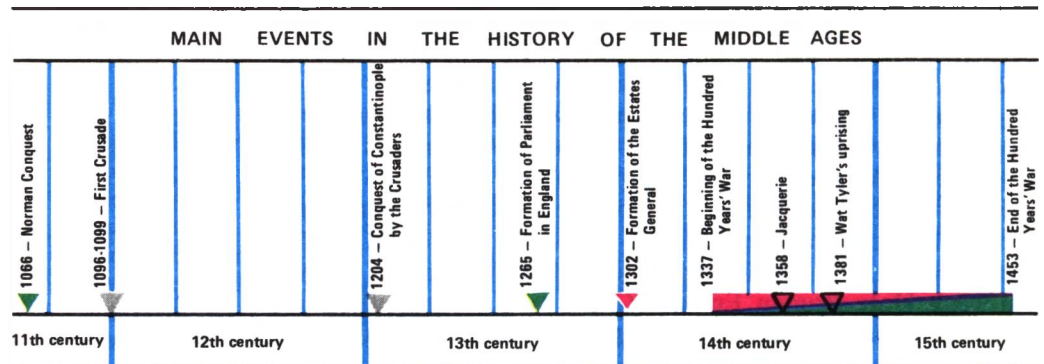
Holy Roman emperors frequently waged wars of conquest. They undertook campaigns against Italy and opposed the Pope. All this required much money and weakened the emperor's power to such an extent that he had to recognise the princes' total independence. The title of emperor was no longer hereditary; the emperor was elected by the seven most powerful princes.

Italy also remained fragmented. In the 11th-12th centuries, many Italian towns got the better of their suzerains and gained independence. Town authorities issued laws on the emancipation of peasants from serfdom. The largest cities subjugated the rural regions around them. Italy also had a great number of independent feudal estates. Although a rich country, it was torn apart by internecine discord and fell prey to its more powerful neighbours. Foreign invasions were ruining Italy and undermining its economy.

- ? 1. What were the causes of the formation of centralised states? 2. How did Parliament in England and the Estates General in France strengthen royal authority? What do these bodies have in common and how

do they differ? 3. Draw a comparison between royal authority in the 11th century and the late 15th century. 4. Give reasons to show that in centralised states the economy and culture developed more

rapidly and successfully than during the period of feudal fragmentation. 5. Why did Germany, unlike France and England, remain a fragmented country? 6. What were the consequences of feudal fragmentation?



CHAPTER 7

THE HUSSITE MOVEMENT IN BOHEMIA

In the first half of the 15th century, feudal Europe was shaken by a powerful class and popular liberation struggle which swept over Bohemia, a small Slavic country.

§ 31. Popular Struggle Is on the Rise

1. *Bohemia as Part of the Holy Roman Empire.* In the mid-14th century Bohemia became the most powerful state in the Holy Roman Empire. The Bohemian king ranked first among the princes who had acquired the right to elect the emperor. Charles IV (1346-1378) was elected Roman Emperor.

Charles IV avoided wars but still managed to expand the territory of the Bohemian kingdom by buying land and arranging advantageous marriages for his children.

Charles tried to curtail the rights of big feudal lords but failed to achieve much. The king encouraged the development of the crafts, mining and trade.

2. *The Advance of the Economy.* In the 14th century, Bohemia was one of the more developed countries in Europe. Heavy ploughs pulled by several pairs of horses were increasingly used in the fields. The country had a great number of mills run both by water and wind.

The mountain ridges surrounding the country were rich in iron and non-ferrous metal ores. Bohemia led Europe in the production of silver which at that time was used to mint

Which classes and sections of Bohemia's population were dissatisfied with their condition in the 14th century? What caused this dissatisfaction, and against whom was it directed?

When was the Bohemian state formed?



Royal Castle Karlštejn (mid-14th century)

Bohemia's coat of arms

coins. Mining and the production of woollen fabrics and glass (a rare craft at that time) were developing successfully. Town craftsmen engaged in over 200 trades.

Bohemia, which lay almost in the centre of Europe, was at the crossroads of trade routes from the Baltic Sea to Italy, and from Russia and Poland to Germany. Twice a year, fairs were held in Prague. They attracted merchants from Poland, Germany and Italy.

With a population of about 40,000, Prague, which under Charles IV became the capital of the empire, was a large city for that time. Much construction was going on there: the famous *Charles Bridge* was built at that time, and the construction of *St. Vitus Cathedral* had begun. Adorned with magnificent palaces and cathedrals, the capital of Bohemia

Prague. *Late 15th-century drawing*
The city, located on the banks of the Vltava, consists of several parts. In the distance is *Hrad*, the oldest part of the town, with the castle of the Czech kings and *St. Vitus Cathedral*. To the *right* is the old town, the business part of Prague with the town hall and the market square.



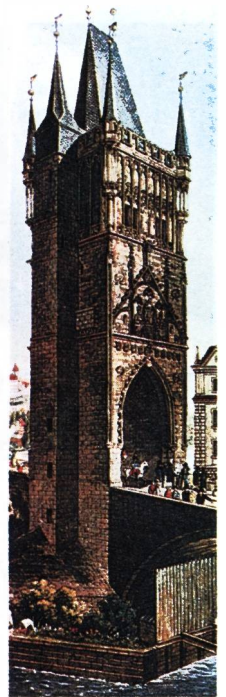
was justifiably considered one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Prague University, one of the oldest in Europe, was also founded at that time.

3. *The Situation of the Peasantry and the Town Poor.*
Economic advances did not make the life of the common people easier. On the contrary, oppression by the feudal lords and wealthy townspeople became even worse. Big landowners lived in luxury, and the knights did not wish to fall behind. A contemporary writer said: "Everyone wants to be a lord, for it is easy to ride fat horses, intimidate poor people, fleece them, and always eat well and drink a lot."

Fourteenth-century Bohemian villages had all three kinds of duties: *corvée*, rent in kind, and money rent. The feudal lords never ceased to increase the money rent. *Corvée* became worse in a number of regions too. Some documents stated that the peasants were obliged to work for their master



Ore-mining in Bohemia. 15th-century miniature. In the centre are smithies where the miners' tools were made and repaired. Top, owners of the mines.



whenever he summoned them. Even for the smallest misdemeanours, serfs were given lashings or tortured. A peasant caught at night near the lord's sheafs could be sentenced to death.

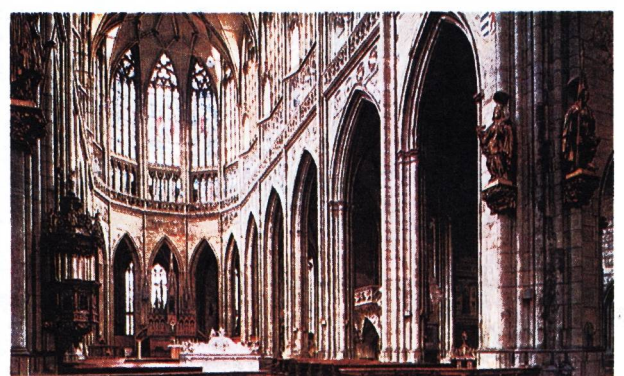
The number of poor townspeople was growing: they made up nearly a half of the urban population. Crowds of hungry people begged at the doors of cathedrals.

4. *Church Oppression.* The biggest landowner in Bohemia was the Catholic Church. It owned a third of the most fertile lands. The Archbishop of Prague, the church head in Bohemia, owned 14 towns and 900 villages. The monasteries were particularly wealthy. In the years of crop failures, they grew rich selling their surplus produce at high prices to the starving people.

Innumerable church duties drove the peasants and townspeople to exhaustion. The bulk of the income which the clergy received in Bohemia was sent on to Rome. Bishops and abbots paid gold for important church positions and made the believers foot the bill. The greed and venality of the Popes

Charles's Bridge and the Hrad of Prague

St. Vitus Cathedral (mid-14th century). The Cathedral, once used for coronations, houses masterpieces of art and crafts, collected in the course of centuries.



raised indignation and scorn all over Europe. A bitter joke popular at the time was: "If Christ came to Rome, he would not be given an audience without a bribe."

General discontent against the Catholic Church was growing in Bohemia. The wealth and possessions of bishops and monasteries aroused the envy of noblemen and knights who wanted to add church lands to their property. The rich townspeople did not want to spend money on maintaining the luxurious way of life of the clergy. The peasants and the town poor opposed the church and, by the same token, feudal oppression.

5. *Foreign Domination.* The wealth created by the Czech people attracted German feudal lords. German noblemen entered the service of Bohemian kings, advanced to top positions at the royal court, and became big landowners. They ruthlessly exploited the Czech peasants. Using their proximity to the king, the German feudal lords, just like their Czech counterparts, infringed on the rights of knights and even took away their lands. Many Czech knights served for pay in the Bohemian or foreign armies, and some became highway robbers.

German merchants and craftsmen came to settle in Czech towns. They established their control over urban self-government bodies. Up to the middle of the 14th century, not a single Czech sat on the city council of Prague.

Czech craftsmen and merchants fought for a right to take part in the administration of towns and cities. In this struggle, they were supported by the town poor, especially by those who suffered most at the hands of the rich Germans. The mines of Bohemia were now also controlled by the Germans. The mine owners became fabulously rich by mercilessly exploiting the labour of Czech miners.

The Germans wanted to propagate their language and customs in Bohemia. Having ousted the Czechs, they established their control in Prague University. The Czech people found themselves under foreign domination. Contemporaries said that "a Czech lives in his own country as an exile".

How did the development of cities, the crafts and trade affect the condition of peasants in other countries?

What were the sources of wealth of the Pope and the Catholic Church?

- ? 1. Why did Germany remain a fragmented state while in France and England centralised states were formed? 2. Why did economic advances in Bohemia result in greater feudal oppression? Was it the same in other countries? How can you explain this coincidence?

§ 32. The Hussite Movement Begins

(Map No. 10)

1. John Huss Leads the Liberation Struggle. In the early 15th century, a small church in Prague began to attract more and more people. Townspeople, peasants and knights assembled there to listen to the fiery speeches of *John Huss*, a professor at Prague University.

What were the heretics? How did the Catholic Church persecute them?

John Huss (1371-1415) understood the condition of his people very well. He was born and grew up in a peasant family. Talented and hard-working, he had to overcome great difficulties to attain a university education.

What attracted the people to hear Huss' speeches? John Huss was merciless in exposing the avariciousness of the clergy. He was disgusted with the sale of church positions in Rome and called the Pope the chief swindler: "There are very few clergymen who have not bought their positions for money and do not exact money from the faithful... The last penny which a poor old woman has set aside will be extracted by a base clergyman. So is it not correct to say that he is more crafty and vile than a thief?" John Huss denounced the sale of indulgences in Bohemia.

After criticising the clergy, Huss began to press for a reform in the church. He insisted that the wealth which the church had rapaciously amassed should be taken away from it, as should the lands belonging to bishops and monasteries. He said that the believers did not need a host of clergymen, that Bohemia ought to have its own church, independent of the Pope and headed by the king, and that force had to be used against the Pope. "Brothers, the time of war and the sword will soon come," he said.

Huss demanded that church rituals be free of charge and that services be conducted in the native language. He himself developed a grammar of the Czech language.

John Huss was a *patriot*—he was devoted to his country and his people. Addressing the people, he said that "the Czechs should be in the forefront, not in the background", and appealed to them to rise against foreign invaders. He had no hatred for other peoples, however; he said that a good German was dearer to him than a bad Czech.

Even though John Huss did not oppose the feudal system, he considered it unfair that the peasants should be living in poverty and misery. He said that the nobility and the clergy

were robbing the poor while “cherishing their own bellies in luxury”. He believed that if feudal lords perpetrated injustice, the people were not only justified but obliged to rise against the “iniquitous authorities”.

2. *The Death of John Huss.* The clergy and the German feudal nobility decided to get rid of the courageous Czech patriot. The Archbishop of Prague excommunicated him. But the number of his followers continued to grow. Then the Pope summoned him to the general church council, an assembly of the top clergy which met in the town of *Constance* in southern Germany. The German emperor sent Huss a safe-conduct guaranteeing his complete security.

Yet when in Constance, Huss was arrested, chained and declared a heretic. The church council demanded that he renounce his views. Huss replied: “If I go back on my word, how shall I face my people whom I have always taught to speak the truth.” He preferred to die rather than change his convictions. The church council sentenced him to death.

John Huss before the Council of Constance. *Modern painting*



On July 6, 1415, John Huss was burned at the stake. Faced with extremely painful death, he behaved with great courage.

3. *An Armed Struggle Begins.* The execution of John Huss caused indignation among the Czech people. Crowds of peasants went to the mountains to listen to the speeches of itinerant preachers who urged the people to take up arms and fight against the enemies of the Czech people.

In 1419, the poor sections of Prague population began an uprising. The people stormed the town hall and threw the hated members of the city administration out of windows. An armed struggle began in the country. The craftsmen and



John Huss. 17th-century engraving

the urban poor chased the rich Germans out of towns. The insurgents destroyed monasteries and churches, and drove away the bishops and monks. Those who rose against the Catholic Church and German domination called themselves *Hussites*—followers of John Huss.

4. *The Taborites and the Moderates.* A favourite site of popular gatherings was the Tábor mountain in the south of Bohemia. This was the place where the insurgents assembled. They founded a new town, built sturdy fortifications around it, and called it *Tábor*, like the mountain.

The people who came to Tábor had to put all their money and jewellery into special barrels standing in the town streets. The money was used to buy weapons for the insurgents and to help the poor. All the people were considered equal in Tábor and addressed each other as “brother” or “sister”.

Those who were determined to fight until they achieved victory over the enemies of the Czech people called themselves *Taborites*. Their main force consisted of insurgent peasants, and their goal was to abolish serfdom, corvée and duties, and to seize church lands. There were many small craftsmen and poor townsmen among the Taborites. Together with the peasants, they fought to liberate their country from the German oppressors and abolish the rule of the Pope in Bohemia. The most determined dreamed about the time when “there will no longer be kings, feudal lords, or serfs in the world”, and when the people themselves would govern the country.

The Taborites were joined by a number of impoverished knights who realised that it was only the insurgent populace that could defeat the Catholic Church and the German feudal lords.

The other group of the Hussites was called the *Moderates*. These were fairly wealthy craftsmen, merchants and most of the Czech feudal nobility. The Moderates wanted to get rid of the rich Germans and weaken the Catholic Church. Yet they were afraid of the common people who had risen to fight all oppressors, and so their action was not as resolute as that of the Taborites.

The Hussite movement began in Bohemia with the struggle of the people against the feudal system, foreign domination and the Catholic Church. Participants in the struggle held progressive views and acted in a more organised way than the peasants during the spontaneous uprisings.

§ 33. The Hussite Wars

(Map No. 10)

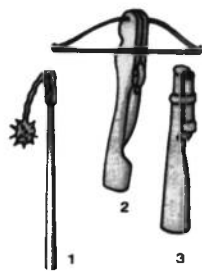
1. *The Crusades Against the Hussites.* The German feudal lords and the Catholic Church did not want to lose their Bohemian possessions. They decided to smother the liberation struggle of the Czech people. The Pope declared a crusade against the Hussites. The crusader army, which consisted mostly of German feudal lords, was headed by the German emperor himself. Hoping to lay their hands on the country's riches, knights and mercenaries from many other European countries joined the campaign.

In 1420, they invaded Bohemia in a 100,000-strong force. The route of the crusaders towards the Czech capital was marked by plunder and fires, killings and torture. The crusaders surrounded Prague. A fierce battle began on the hill at the eastern gate where a small detachment of Taborites, who had come to the aid of the city defenders, was entrenched. Courageous fighters, the Hussites kept throwing back the enemy cavalry. At the decisive moment, a Taborite unit came out of the city gate and struck at the enemy rear. The crusaders fled in confusion.

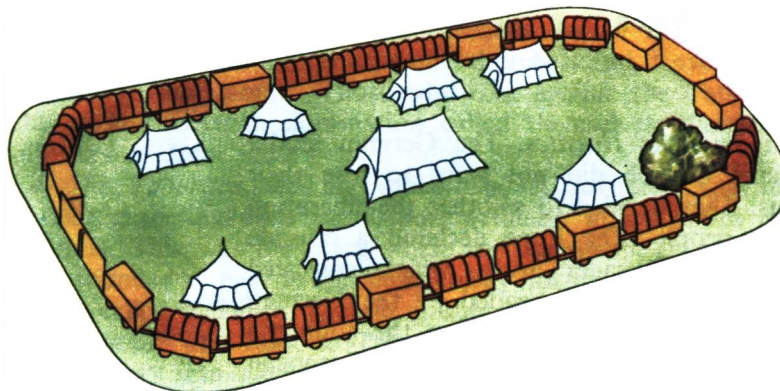
The Pope and the emperor undertook four more campaigns against the Hussites, but they all ended as ingloriously as the first one.

2. *The People's Army.* What was the secret of the Hussites' victories over the crusaders? It was a *people's army* consisting of peasants, craftsmen and the town poor that fought against a feudal army of murderers and robbers. The Taborites had no horses or knights' weaponry. Infantrymen accounted for the bulk of their army. The soldiers were armed with iron-edged flails, scythes made into lances, axes, and sticks with iron points. The peasants used these weapons to smash the feudal lords and mercenaries who were well-versed in the art of war. They unhorsed the knights with special hooks, and finished them off with flails.

The Taborites also made skilful use of artillery. They were the first to use the small field cannon transported in a cart. These cannons were used against knights in open field battles. To reinforce their ranks against the cavalry, the Taborite infantry built fortifications with peasant carts. The crusader armies were never able to overrun these movable fortresses.



Hussite weapons: 1) a mace; 2) a crossbow; 3) an arquebus



Fortified camp of the Hussites. *Reconstruction.*

As a rule, the camp was set up on a hill top or on a river bank; sometimes it was surrounded by a shallow moat. When, having exhausted their strength in the first attack, the knights retreated, Hussite cavalry charged at the enemy through the spaces between the carts.

As opposed to the mercenary troops, the popular army had high morale; the soldiers were stubborn and disciplined fighters. There was no place for robbers and brigands among their ranks.

The people of Bohemia were waging a just war—a war against their oppressors. They were defending the independence of their country.

3. *Jan Ziska.* The commanders of the popular army were elected by the soldiers themselves. The main organiser and leader of the Hussite troops was *Jan Ziska*, an impoverished knight and an experienced soldier. Under his leadership, the Hussites won the battle for Prague.

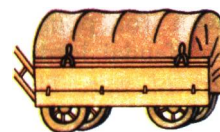
Then Ziska was wounded in the head and lost his eyesight, but continued to serve as commander. His assistants were his “eyes”: they informed him about the position and movements of troops. The blind general, who had an excellent knowledge of the hills and valleys of his native country, unerringly selected the most advantageous position for his troops. He had a knack of appearing with his troops where he was least expected. Often, the knights would disperse in a panic as soon as they heard the songs of Hussites and the rattle of their carts. The enemies called Ziska “the fearsome blind man” and shuddered at the sound of his name.

The soldiers were very fond of their leader. When Ziska died, they felt orphaned. The Czech people have not forgotten the hero: many places in Bohemia have been named after him, and monuments to him erected in towns.

4. *Hussite Military Campaigns in Other Countries.* After Ziska’s death, new talented generals came forward to lead the Hussite troops. In addition to defending their country, the Taborites now initiated an offensive campaign. They carried



Jan Ziska. 17th-century engraving



Hussite cart



Hussite army on the march. *Modern painting*

out successful raids into Poland and Hungary, penetrated deep into Germany, and even reached the Baltic Sea. Hussite soldiers destroyed the feudal lords' castles and monasteries but never touched the huts of the poor. They circulated letters explaining the goals of their struggle. One of the letters stated: "For the sake of the most important thing—the defence of the country—we have decided to give our lives in the glorious struggle."

The Taborites' ideas, which the feudal lords and the clergy named "the Czech poison", were spreading throughout Europe. Uprisings of peasants and the town poor began in Germany and Poland.

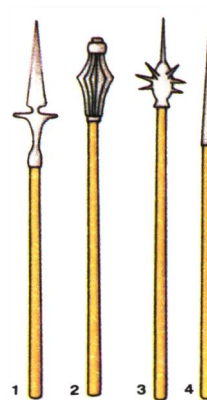
5. *The Moderates' Betrayal.* Bohemian feudal lords and the rich townsmen were frightened by the Taborites' active opposition to the feudal order. The noblemen and knights had already captured church lands and now wished to put the yoke of feudal oppression back on the neck of their peasants.

Seeing that the crusades were unsuccessful, the Pope and the emperor decided to put an end to the liberation struggle in Bohemia with the help of the Czechs themselves. A war between the Moderates and the Taborites began.

In 1434, the Moderates attacked the Taborites near the town of *Lipany* to the east of Prague. Feigning a retreat, the Moderates lured their enemies out of their fortified cart camps and routed the Taborites. The feudals even killed prisoners; the few who remained alive were herded into barns and burned alive at night.

After the defeat at Lipany, some isolated units of the Taborites continued to fight until their last stronghold, Tábor, fell.

6. *The Significance of the Hussite Movement.* For fifteen



Hussite weapons: 1) a boar-spear; 2) a cudgel with an iron point; 3) a mace; 4) a lance

years (1419-1434), the Czech people waged a heroic struggle against feudal oppression, foreign rule and the Catholic Church. The struggle of the Taborites was a *peasant war*: as opposed to the peasant uprisings in England and France, it was longer and better organised and involved the entire country. The peasants and the town poor suffered a defeat, but still they managed, at least for some time, to stop the attempts of the nobility to increase feudal exploitation.

The insurgent people dealt a severe blow to the Catholic Church which never recovered all the lands it lost or restored all the monasteries that were destroyed.

Foreign rule in Bohemia was undermined. As a result of the Hussite wars, the population of most cities was now made up of Czechs. The Czech language replaced German in courts and offices.

The progressive ideas of the Hussites promoted the struggle of the masses against feudal oppression in Europe.

- ? 1. Why were the Hussites able to defeat the crusaders' troops? 2. Why do the Czech people honour the memory of Jan Ziska? 3. Why did the Moderates act in collusion with the enemies of the Czech people? 4. How did the Hussite movement differ from the 14th-century peasant uprisings in France and England? Compare their goals, organisation and duration. What did they have in common? 5. What is the historic significance of the Hussite wars? For whom were these wars just? Why?

CHAPTER 8

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE STRUGGLE OF EUROPEAN PEOPLES AGAINST TURKISH INVADERS

In the 14th century, Europe was invaded by Ottoman Turks, a strong and dangerous enemy which came from the southeast. The Ottoman invaders not only subjugated many peoples in Europe, Asia and Africa but also influenced relations among states.

§ 34. The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkan Peninsula

(Map No. 11)

1. *The Balkan Countries before the Ottoman Conquest.* In the late 12th century, Bulgarians launched an uprising and shook off Byzantine domination. The *Bulgarian Kingdom* became the largest state in the Balkans. But big feudal lords were weakening the country by internecine wars. Outside enemies also harassed it. In the mid-14th century, the enfeebled Bulgarian Kingdom was split into three independent principalities.

In the meantime, another state of Southern Slavs, *Serbia*, was growing and getting stronger. Its king *Stephen Dushan* (1331-1355) carried out several successful campaigns against Byzantium. The vast kingdom of Serbia stretched up to the Aegean Sea in the south. Stephen Dushan was now Tsar of the Serbs and Greeks. But after his death, Serbia was split into many petty feudal principalities.

The third major state in the Balkans, the *Byzantine Empire*, had lost its former importance. After the crusaders' conquest in 1204 and the havoc it caused, the Byzantine economy declined beyond restoration. Venetians and Genoans were total masters in coastal towns and dominated all trade. The impoverished population was unable to pay high taxes. The treasury was empty; the emperors were even forced to sell their jewels and replace them with imitation stones. Frequent wars for the throne sapped the strength of the state. European countries undertook frequent campaigns against Byzantium to capture part of its territory.

In the 14th century, the Balkan countries were weakened by conflicts and the internecine wars between feudal lords.

2. *The First Ottoman Conquests.* At that time, the Balkan

peoples acquired a new dangerous enemy. In the late 13th century, a feudal state headed by Prince *Osman I* was formed on the territory of the state of the Seljuk Turks. The tribes which united under his leadership came to be known as the *Ottoman Turks*. The head of the *Ottoman state* later assumed the title of *sultan*.

Having conquered Asia Minor, the Turkish feudal lords were determined to capture new territories. Only a narrow strait separated them from the European coast. Fighting against Serbia and Bulgaria, Byzantium applied to the Ottomans for help thus preparing its own ruin. The Ottoman cavalry began to make incursions into the Balkans, plundering and devastating whole regions.

A contemporary wrote about Ottoman raids: "Some of the Christians were killed, others driven away into slavery, and those who remained there died of starvation."

Having made sure that the Balkan countries were weak, the Ottomans proceeded from raids to conquests. They seized a major part of the Byzantine possessions in Europe. The emperor had to submit to the sultan as his vassal and pay tribute to him.

The Ottoman Turks invaded Bulgaria. The Bulgarians fought stubbornly for each town; peasants staged ambushes and attacked the invaders. But the Bulgarian feudal lords failed to join forces against the invaders.

In the late 14th century, Bulgaria fell under the sultan's rule.

3. *The Battle of Kossovo*. At about the same time, the Ottoman invaders set upon Serbia. The decisive battle took place in 1389 in *Kossovo Field* in the country's south.

The Turks had twice as many troops as the Serbs; the strength of the latter's forces was undermined by discord among

Miloš Obilić kills the Sultan. *Modern painting*



the princes. Many princes failed to arrive at the battlefield with their troops, others only watched the action but did not take part in it. Right from the start, the battle was a fierce one. Miloš Obilić, a courageous Serbian patriot, penetrated the Ottoman camp and killed the sultan with his sword, although this meant certain death for Miloš. Confusion set in among the Turks. The Serbs began to push forward but the sultan's son brought fresh troops into the battle. The Ottomans won the battle and captured and killed the Serbian ruler.

The defeat at Kossovo was a great tragedy for the Serbian people.

After the battle of Kossovo, many Serbian feudal lords pledged allegiance to the sultan in order to retain their lands. Still, the struggle against the invaders continued. It took the sultan 70 years to completely subjugate Serbia.

The threat of Ottoman invasion was hanging over the countries of Central Europe. With the assistance of the Pope, a number of crusades were organised against the Turks; all, however, ended in total defeat.

4. *The Fall of Byzantium.* The Ottoman feudal lords had long dreamed of capturing Constantinople. *Mehmed II*, a power-hungry and ruthless ruler, amassed a force of no less than 100,000 soldiers and besieged the Byzantine capital on land. The Ottomans brought their vessels into the Sea of Marmara and cut Constantinople off from the other countries.

Byzantium was unable to maintain a large mercenary army as it did not have enough money; the feudal lords were afraid to arm the peasants for fighting the Turks. The government could muster only a 10,000-strong force to defend the city. The Turks had the most powerful artillery in Europe. Night



Ottoman army on the march. 16th-century miniature
Sultan Suleiman I the Magnificent on horseback (*centre*) is accompanied by the vizier and a group of soldiers.

and day, they bombarded the decayed walls of Constantinople using heavy cannons. When the defenders repulsed the first fierce attack, the Turks began to dig a tunnel under the city gates. But the besieged townspeople guessed their intentions and blew the passage up together with the Ottoman soldiers.

Enraged by the failures, Mehmed II ordered his ships to enter *Golden Horn*, the inner harbour of Constantinople, and besiege the city from the northern side which was not very well fortified. The entrance into the harbour was blocked by a heavy chain through which not a single ship could pass. But, working at night, the Turks brought their ships into Golden Horn across dry land, building a wooden planking and thoroughly greasing it.

After surrounding Constantinople, the Ottoman troops began the decisive assault. They managed to capture part of the wall and force their way through the city gate. The last Byzantine emperor fell in the bloody battle. On the 53rd day of the siege, the Turks took Constantinople.

Thus, in 1453, the Byzantine Empire ceased to exist. The sultan gave his army three days to loot the city. Most of the defenders were killed, and about 60,000 citizens sold into slavery. Constantinople, which the Turks renamed *Istanbul*, became the capital of the Ottoman state.

The Ottoman Turks had consolidated their control over the Balkan Peninsula.

Excerpts from the Folk Song "The Battle of Kossovo"

*We could see two powerful armies,
Those armies clashed in deadly battle,
Two kings perished in that battle.
There were Turks surviving there maybe,
But the Serbs, the few that were still living,
Were covered with blood and mortal wounds.
Many spears have been broken there,
Many spears—both Serbian and Turkish.
The Serbs were staunch defending their leader,
Miloš was among the heroes killed...
Near the Sitnica, the cold river,
Where so many Turks have fallen.
It was he who slashed Murad the Sultan
And twelve thousand Turks together with him.
In the memories of people he'll live on,
In the songs and legends he'll live on
For as long as Kossovo remains.*

- ? 1. Why did the Ottoman Turks manage to conquer the Balkan Peninsula? 2. Cite facts showing that the peoples of the Balkan countries put up a heroic resistance to the Ottoman invaders. 3. On the maps, trace the course of the siege and the storming of Constantinople. What event occurred in Western Europe the year that Constantinople was taken? How many centuries did the Byzantine Empire exist?

§ 35. The Might of the Ottoman Empire and the Beginning of Its Decline

(Map No. 11)

1. Further Ottoman Conquests. Having seized Constantinople, the Ottoman Turks gained control over the trade routes connecting Europe with Asia. This dealt a serious blow to Italian trade.

In the second half of the 15th century, the Turks subjugated the *Crimea*. Supported by the Turkish sultan, the Crimean Tatars made devastating forays into Ukrainian, Polish and Russian lands. After years of struggle, the rulers of the Danubian principalities of *Moldavia* and *Wallachia* acknowledged themselves vassals of the sultan.

In Asia, the Turks conquered *Mesopotamia*, *Armenia* and the western part of *Georgia*, as well as *Syria* and *Arabia*, including Mecca, the Arab Holy City.

In Africa, the Ottoman Turks conquered Egypt and subsequently the whole of the North African coast (except *Morocco*). Having seized the city of *Algiers*, the Muslim pirates made it the capital of their state. From here the pirate fleet attacked the coastal countries of the Mediterranean.

Under *Suleiman I* (1520-1566), the most powerful sultan, the Ottomans penetrated deep into Central Europe. In the eight campaigns against *Hungary*, the Turks conquered most of the country's territory. For 150 years, Hungary remained under Ottoman domination. Suleiman also attacked Vienna, the capital of *Austria*, but was defeated there.

As a result of the Ottoman conquests, a vast *Ottoman Empire* was established, a state which comprised many countries and peoples. The possessions of the Ottoman Turks lay on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.

2. The Sultan's Rule. War and plunder were the chief source of the Turkish feudal lords' wealth. "Day and night, our horses are saddled and we bear a sword," said Suleiman I.



Turks besieging Vienna in 1529. 16th-century miniature
Commander-in-chief announces the Sultan's order to leave Vienna at a meeting of the war council.

To wage wars successfully, the Turkish feudal lords needed a strong leader; the sultan thus had unlimited powers. He had a right not only to dismiss but also to sentence to death even top officials.

The armed forces of the Ottoman Turks were much stronger and more numerous than the armies of European countries. Apart from a large feudal cavalry, the sultan also had standing infantry troops called *janissaries*. The janissaries received land plots in exchange for their services and therefore were devoted to the sultan. They were known for their unheard-of ferocity in battle.

All non-Muslims had to pay a high poll tax collected from each regardless of age. The sultan's rule was supported by the Muslim clergy, which instilled in the faithful the idea that the sultan was the shadow of God on earth. Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, said that the sabre and religion were inseparable.

3. *The Condition of the Conquered Peoples.* The toiling masses in the Ottoman Empire were severely oppressed by the Turkish feudal lords. The Ottomans called the people obliged to pay taxes *raya* ("herd"). To be able to pay the taxes for using land and water, peasants had to give away almost half of their harvest. They also had to work without payment building mosques, fortresses and other structures. Without the feudal lord's permission, a peasant was not allowed to fell a tree or plant a vineyard. In all, peasants had to pay 80 different taxes and dues.

The conquered peoples suffered most. During the conquest, the Ottoman troops wreaked terrible devastation, and killed or captured thousands of people. The fields were not cultivated; famine began. The forays of Turkish feudal lords continued even after the conquests.

The invaders wanted the locals to give up their religion and convert to Islam, tried to eradicate native languages and destroy cultures.

The non-Muslims in the Ottoman Empire had no rights whatsoever. They were forbidden to ride a horse, carry arms, and build taller houses than those of the Ottoman Turks. The most hated practice was "the live tax": the Ottomans chose the strongest boys, took them away from their parents, and converted them to Islam by force and enlisted them into the janissary army.



Janissary



Turkish cavalryman



Naval battle between the Turkish and the Spanish fleets. *Miniature*

The Ottoman oppression slowed down the development of the economy and culture in the subjugated countries.

4. *The People's Struggle Against Ottoman Rule.* The Ottoman Empire was able to control the population of the conquered countries by force of arms alone. The peoples subjugated by the Turks—Armenians and Georgians in the Caucasus, and Hungarians, Greeks and Albanians in Central and Southeastern Europe—never stopped fighting for their independence. Southern Slavs waged a struggle against the conquerors for centuries.

Bulgarian and Serb guerrillas—*haiduks*—frequently raided towns and took part in peasant uprisings. Their struggle was described in folk songs. The brave men went into the mountains and forests “to win back their land, set their children free, save their wives from slavery, preserve the memory of their fathers and avenge their mothers”. They gave an oath never to separate and to be loyal to one another until the end. One song says that often, when the *haiduks* were hiding from the Turks, “they were so hungry they had to eat mountain earth and so thirsty they had to lick water from the leaves”. Attempts by the Ottoman troops to clear the woods and mountains of popular fighters failed. Risking their lives, peasants gave shelter to the *haiduks*, shared their last piece of bread with them and warned them if there was danger.

Resisting their oppressors, the Slavic peoples carefully preserved their own culture, customs and language. The working people despised the Slav feudal lords who had converted to Islam and pledged allegiance to the sultan.

Beginning in the mid-16th century, Mediterranean trade slowed down. This reduced the income received by the sultan. The feudal lords serving in his army began to treat the lands they had received for their service as their own property. Many evaded participating in military campaigns; discipline in the army grew lax. The cavalry became less numerous.

The heroic struggle of the Slavic peoples undermined the Ottoman Empire and safeguarded Europe from an Ottoman conquest.

- ?
1. On the map, find the countries which were part of the Ottoman Empire in Asia, Africa and Europe in the 16th century. What explains the military successes of the Turkish feudal lords?
 2. How did the Turkish feudal lords oppress the peoples of the conquered countries?
 3. What do we know from folk songs about the struggle of the Balkan peoples against their Ottoman oppressors? What was the significance of this struggle?

CHAPTER 9

WEST EUROPEAN CULTURE IN THE 11th–15th CENTURIES

The growth of cities and the formation of centralised states in Western Europe promoted the development of culture. As compared to the Early Middle Ages, education, science and art in the 11th–15th centuries were considerably more advanced.

§ 36. Education and Science

1. *Intellectual Horizons Expand.* The development of trade and the growth of towns made ever more people leave their native parts. Merchants, craftsmen, itinerant actors and pilgrims travelled all over Europe.

The Crusades had revealed the greatness and diversity of the world to Europeans, prompting their interest in other countries. Sometimes, travellers found themselves far beyond the boundaries of the Christian world and brought back fascinating tales about the life of other peoples.

In the 13th century, the first accurate facts about Far Eastern countries were related by *Marco Polo*, a Venetian merchant and traveller. He spent some 25 years away from his country; for a long time he lived in China closely observing that country's life. After returning to Italy, he wrote a book in which he gave a lively and entertaining description of the life and customs of Asian peoples. For a long time, maps for travellers were drawn up on the basis of his books.



Town school. 16th-century engraving

In a small room, lessons in reading, writing, arithmetics and singing are all held at the same time.

2. *The Development of Education.* As the cities expanded, the king needed literate people: it was necessary to calculate the income received from trade and conduct proceedings in town and city councils. To run the monarchy, educated officials were needed. In towns, *secular schools* were established. The pupils there were taught writing and arithmetics better than in parish schools, and even studied some natural science.

University lecture.
15th-century minia-
ture

Manuscript page
(Prague, early 15th
century)



In the 12th century, the first higher schools—*universities*—were founded in Europe. The teaching there was in Latin, so young men from any country were able to attend a university. The students of the same nationality united into societies called “nations”. The masters (instructors) also formed unions depending on the subject they taught. These were called *departments*, and were headed by *deans*. The students and the teachers together elected the *rector* (ruler), who was head of the whole university.

At universities, young men studied the science of religion—*theology*, as well as law and medicine. The students (from the Latin *studere*, to be diligent, study) listened to lectures and wrote them down. The teachers read out excerpts from books and explained obscure passages from the rostrum.

The lectures were discussed at *debates*, contests of students. Sometimes the debates were so heated they ended in fighting among the participants.

In the 15th century, Europe already had 65 universities. The most famous were in Paris, *Bologna* (Italy), *Oxford* (England), Prague, and *Cracow* (Poland).

With the growth of cities, the domination of the church in education was undermined; learning was gradually spreading among the feudal nobility and the townspeople.

3. *The Advancement of Science.* The church stated that man could not penetrate into the mysteries of nature because all things happened as God willed them. For this reason, medieval scholars did not make observations of nature. Their eyes were turned to the pages of church books, yellow with age, where they hoped to find answers to all questions.

Economic development produced genuine scientific knowledge which had no ties with the teachings of the church. Peasants improved the methods of land cultivation and observed animals and plants. Craftsmen tested the properties of metals and stone and made dyes and glass.

In the Middle Ages, such pseudo-sciences as *alchemy* and *astrology* flourished. Astrologists insisted that the future could be foretold by the stars. Kings, generals and travellers consulted them before undertaking any venture. The alchemists wasted their efforts looking for a mysterious substance that could turn any metal into gold.



An astrologist, a mathematician and a scribe. 13th-century miniature

Physician at bedside. 14th-century miniature

At first, hospitals opened only at monasteries, later in cities. By the 13th-15th centuries, the medical science had accumulated a store of useful knowledge.

The knowledge gained in Antiquity was replaced with ridiculous fabrications. The people believed that the earth was a flat disc covered with a dome (the sky). The sun and moon crossed this dome.

For a long time, the Europeans knew very little of what was happening outside Europe, and made up fables about distant countries, allegedly inhabited by dwarfs the size of a fist, people with horse's legs, and birds which flew out of fruit.

Yet *Roger Bacon*, an English scientist who lived in the 13th century, insisted that the purpose of science was to study nature and make it serve the people. He conducted experiments with a magnetic needle and magnifying glasses; he foresaw the invention of the telescope and the microscope.

The clergy persecuted Bacon for his progressive views. His works were condemned by the church, and he spent years in prison where he was put on the Pope's order.

The church persecuted the scholars who held progressive views, fearing that advancement of science would undermine the power of religion.

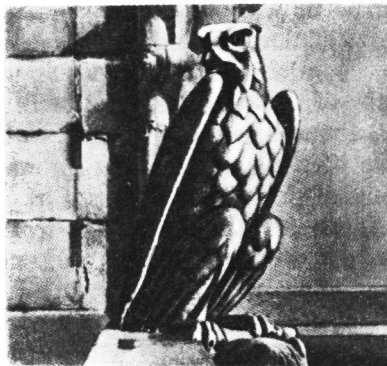
- ? 1. What promoted the advancement of education and science in Europe in the 11th-15th centuries? 2. How did the Europeans expand their knowledge about the world? 3. How was instruction conducted in town schools and at universities? 4. Why did the church persecute Roger Bacon?

§ 37. Art and Literature

1. Architecture. In the 11th century, construction was taking place on a large scale in Europe. The wealthy church built larger cathedrals in order to accommodate more believers. The horizontal wooden beams, which were not very sturdy, were being replaced by *stone vaults*. Their weight could be supported only by very thick walls. Wooden buildings, which were not durable, were replaced by stone ones. The architects of that time borrowed many design ideas from ancient Rome, and so in the 11th-12th centuries architecture came to be known as *Romanesque*.

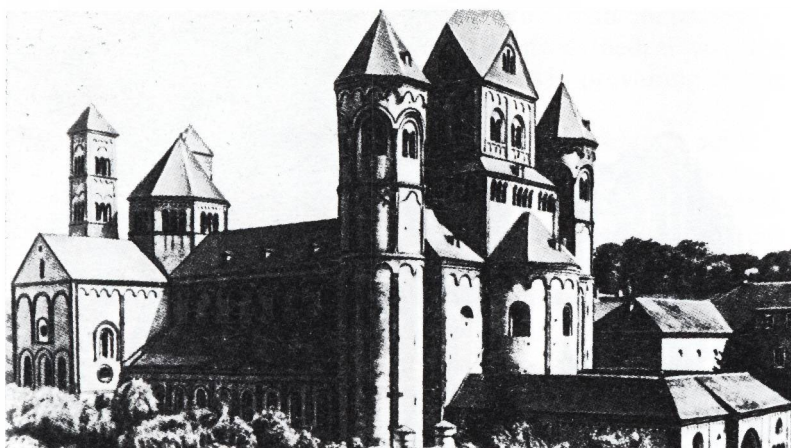
A Romanesque cathedral is a massive building with smooth walls and tall towers. The *semi-circular arch* motif is repeated in its vaults, windows and entrances. It reminds one of the time of feudal wars and the might of the Catholic Church.

Beginning in the late 12th century, towns, which were now



Chimeras of the Notre-Dame de Paris, France (13th century)

The figures reflect the ideas of medieval people about the dark forces of hell, as well as a fondness for the fantastic, characteristic of folk tales and legends.



The church of the Laach monastery (Germany, 12th century)

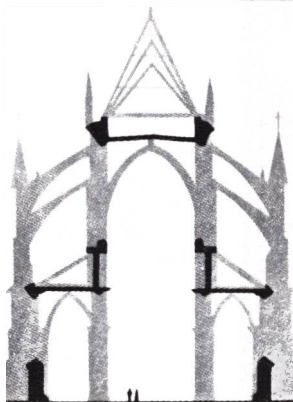
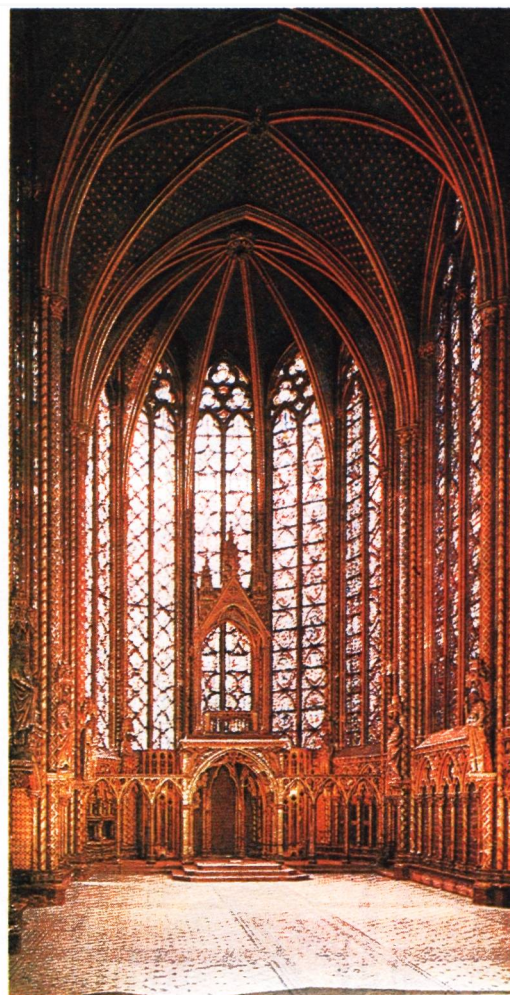
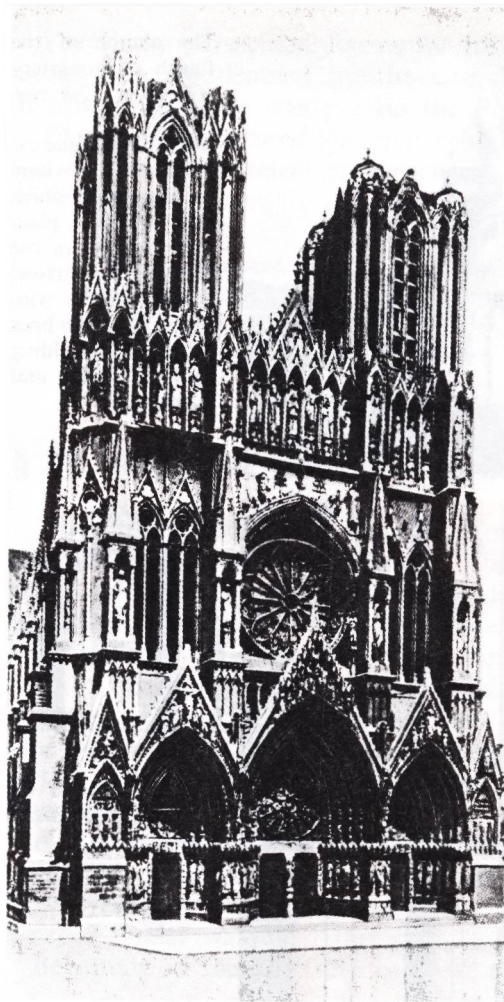
The Romanesque cathedral is a long building with thick and almost plain walls which are cut vertically by narrow, loophole-like windows. The stern lines make the building look forbidding and majestic.



A Romanesque cathedral. Cross-section

Church in Saint-Cerin. Interior (France, 12th century)

The lofty central chamber is separated from the side rooms with rows of thick columns ending in semi-circular arches and vaults.



Rheims Cathedral
(France, 13th-early
14th centuries)

The cathedral is topped by two bell-towers. Many statues stand in the niches by the doors and in the upper part of the building.

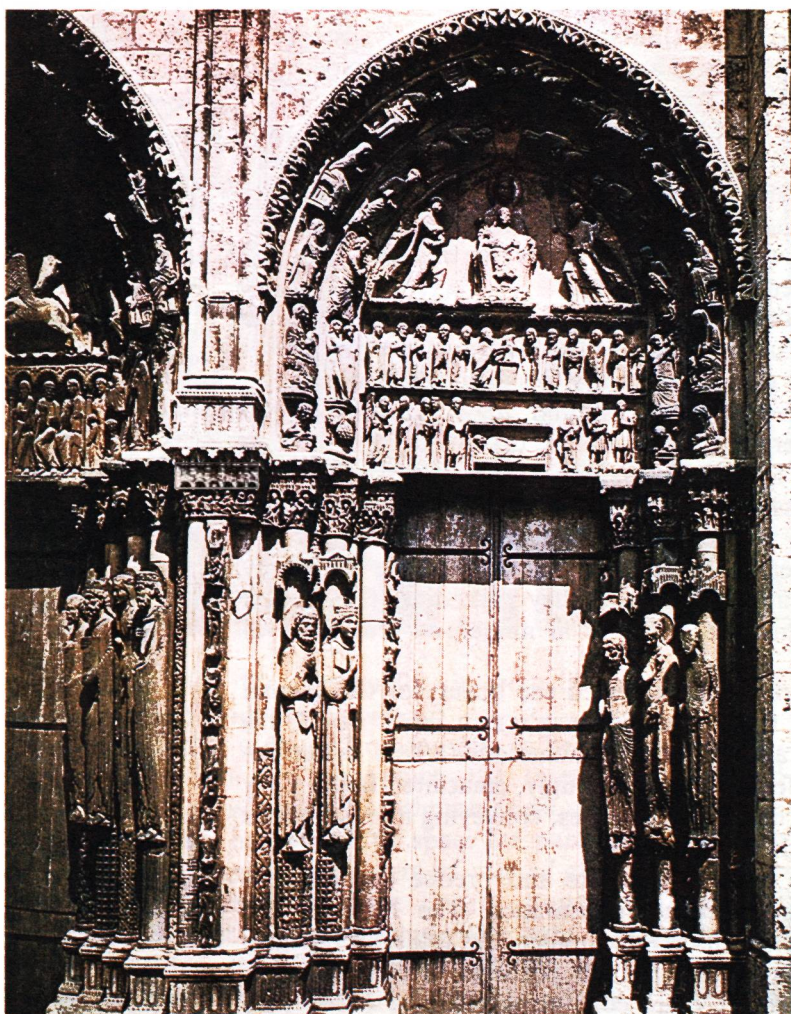
Gothic structure.
Cross-section

Sainte-Chapelle
Church, Paris (mid-
13th century)

The walls are almost totally taken up with huge windows. The pointed arches of the roof rest on clusters of slender columns.

free of the rule of suzerains, began to build new shops, warehouses, town halls and cathedrals. The cathedral was the most handsome building in a town. The style prevailing in the 13th-15th centuries is known as *Gothic*.

As the builders' skill improved, it became possible to replace the heavy vaulted ceiling with a lighter and higher pointed arch. The thick walls were no longer needed. Unlike the dark Romanesque cathedrals, Gothic cathedrals seem transparent thanks to the many huge windows. A multitude of *pointed arches*, steep roofs, tall towers ending in spires produce an



Medieval European cathedrals. Examine the drawings and say which cathedrals are Romanesque and which are Gothic.

Central entrance to the Chartres Cathedral (France, late 12th century)

impression of rapid upward movement. The tallest towers of the largest Gothic cathedrals were up to 150 metres tall, higher than the pyramids in Egypt.

The ignorant and downtrodden common people perceived the cathedrals as a striking contrast to their shabby small huts. Soft light streamed in through tall stained-glass windows creating mysterious dusk. Everything in the huge building was intended to make the believers feel weak and insignificant before an all-powerful God and the Catholic Church. At the same time, they could not help but be enthralled by the grandeur and beauty of the cathedral itself.

For a long time, the cathedral remained the town's only large building. Apart from church services, citizens' assemblies and theatrical performances were held there. Treaties between states were signed there too.

The town's public buildings created a great impression with their beauty and elaborate design. Craftsmen working in many trades—masons, carpenters, glaziers—took part in the construction of town halls and cathedrals. The magnificent cathedrals in Europe's old towns and cities testify to the fact that the common people were very talented.

2. *Sculpture.* In the Middle Ages, sculpture was inseparable from church construction. The cathedrals were decorated with a great number of statues of saints, bishops and kings.

The clergy believed that art should play the role of the Bible for the illiterate, depict scenes described in Christian books, strengthen faith and frighten the believers with hell. The church commissioned the works of art, but they were created by masters from among the common people. Their sculpture conveyed their understanding of life and extolled the generosity and courage of man. Very often, they turned to the subject of motherhood. This was reflected in numerous sculptures of the Madonna.

Unlike ancient art, which glorified the beauty of the human body, medieval art tried to depict man's rich inner world, his thoughts, feelings and moods. Romanesque artists often depicted people with feeble bodies and ugly, emaciated faces. They made them assume unnatural postures, conveying man's feelings of grief or joy with greater force.

Gothic sculpture is more accurate and precise than Romanesque in representing man's appearance. The lines of the body are more clearly discernible under the folds of the garments, and there is motion in the postures. Talented artists often managed to depict quite convincingly things which they



Apostle Peter. Relief sculpture at the doors of the Moissac Church, France (12th century)

The figure is a typical example of Romanesque sculpture. It expresses strong excitement which is conveyed by the tenseness of the neck and the movement of the folds of the garments.



witnessed in real life. Gradually, interest in the beauty of man's face and body was reviving.

3. *Painting*. The walls of Romanesque cathedrals were painted over with murals from which the faces of saints and Christ himself gazed sternly at church-goers. But the walls of Gothic cathedrals had very little space for paintings. From top to bottom, the huge windows were of *stained glass*: the pictures or ornaments were made from bits of transparent coloured glass held together with lead strips. The light poured through the stained glass into the cathedral, falling on the columns, arches and floor in colourful patches and giving it a festive,

Mary and Elizabeth.
Statues by the west entrance to the Rheims Cathedral (France, 13th century)

Ekkehardt and Uta.
Statues of the founders of the cathedral in Naumburg (Germany, 13th century)
The sculptor managed to convey his models' personalities.

joyful atmosphere.

Miniature book illustrations were a great achievement in painting. The brightly coloured pictures showed all aspects of the life of medieval man. For a long time, the artists did not know the laws of perspective: both in the forefront and in the background objects were the same size; that is why the pictures look flat.

Stained-glass windows and miniatures often depicted peasants and craftsmen at work.

4. *Literature.* Poets collected folk songs and tales, and wrote whole rhymed novels (romances) and long poems about military valour and the adventures of knights. Poetic imagination produced an idealised figure of the knight as a brave, magnanimous and just man.

The most famous romance was *The Song of Roland*, written in France in the 11th-12th centuries. It tells about the heroic death of Count Roland and his knights during the retreat of Charlemagne's troops from Spain. The war of conquest against Spain is presented as a war between Christians and Muslims. Roland is portrayed as the perfect knight. He performs incredible feats and dies without once thinking of violating fealty to his suzerain.

The Song of Roland also reflected the feelings of the people: it tells about their love for "dear France" and hatred towards the enemies. The poem condemned the feudal lords who had betrayed France.

In the 12th century, works of literature began to appear in towns and cities. The townspeople liked short and funny rhymed stories. Their heroes were usually a clever and cunning townsman or a merry and resourceful peasant. They always got the better of their opponents—boastful knights or greedy monks.

Over the decades, the poem *Roman de Renart* (Novel about the Fox) was made up in the towns of France from fables and stories. Using animal personification, the poem is about a lazy big feudal lord—the Bear, a stupid clergyman—the Ass, a vicious knight roaming about in search of loot—the Wolf, and an intelligent and resourceful townsman—the Fox. In the struggle with the Wolf, the Fox always wins. But, when he begins to oppress poor people—the Rooster, the Hare and the Snail—he finds himself in a fix.

For the downtrodden and destitute people, literature was a way to express love for their country and protest against feudal oppression.



Death of Roland. Stained-glass window of the Chartres Cathedral (France, 13th century). Right, Roland, mortally wounded, is blowing horn to summon help. Left, he is vainly trying to smash his sword against a rock.

CHAPTER 10

CHINA AND INDIA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Under the feudal system, China and India made good progress in economic and cultural development. But constant invasions of neighbours and the absence of solid ties with the European countries made their progress slower in the late Middle Ages.

§ 38. The Feudal System in China. Popular Uprisings

(Map No. 12)

1. *The Unification of China.* In the 3rd century, several warring states were formed on the territory of the ancient Chinese Empire. China's weakness was used by the nomadic tribes living to the north of the Great Wall of China. One nomadic incursion was followed by another. Throughout several centuries, the invaders looted and devastated the country's northern regions.

The 3rd-4th centuries saw the advent of the feudal system in China. In such a large and populous country, landowners found it difficult to suppress peasant uprisings without assistance from one another. Fragmented, China was unable to repel invaders. Thus, in the late 6th century, the country began to unify. The unified state was headed by an emperor who had unlimited powers. He had a large army and numerous officials at his command.



Water-raising machine



Planting rice. *Indian ink on silk*

After the unification, nomadic invaders were ousted from the northern part of the country. A gradual economic revival began. The peasants restored canals and reinforced dams on the big rivers Huang Ho and Yangtze. On irrigated lands they grew rice, sugar cane and tea. In southern China the soil yielded two harvests a year.

2. *The Condition of the Peasants.* For a long time, all land in China was considered the emperor's property. The peasants were allotted small plots by the state and had to pay taxes to the treasury for the use of the land.

A peasant had to work very hard. From dawn to dusk, he laboured on his tiny plot, nourished the crops and patiently waited for the harvest. When autumn came, a tax-collector would arrive and take the bulk of his produce away. Officials rounded up peasants by thousands for the construction of palaces, temples and fortresses. The peasants worked without pay; overseers urged them on with bamboo sticks.

The emperor gave large land plots to his generals and officials for their service. Beginning in the 8th century, feudal lords began to appropriate state lands without authorisation. Estates cropped up which had hundreds of peasant homesteads.

The peasants had to pay a tax in kind which could amount to up to two-thirds of their harvest. "The rich amass much land in their hands, while the poor have no place to set foot on," a contemporary complained. "The poor give up their crops and food, strain and wear themselves out, and work without even a day's rest." When crops failed or floods occurred, hundreds of thousands starved to death. Unable to bear the feudal oppression, they fled from their native villages and formed large groups in mountains and woods.



Chinese peasant.
Clay, 7th-10th centuries



At the Emperor's
palace. Indian ink on
silk, 16th century

Excerpt from a Historical Essay

The peasants' life is very hard. It is cold, nevertheless they plough; it is hot, nevertheless they weed. The rains soak their bodies, dirt sticks to their feet. All day long they toil, only resting when the stars appear in the sky. Moreover, they often suffer from floods, droughts, frosts and locusts. If by lucky chance the harvest is good, both the treasury and money-lenders begin to clamour for their share. Grain and silk no longer belong to the peasants.

3. *The Peasant War of the 9th Century.* In 874, the dis-jointed peasant units formed a large army in northeastern China. The rebels were headed by *Huang Chao*, a brave and determined peasant who was very good with a javelin and a bow.

Conquering one region after another, the rebels killed the much-hated feudal lords and officials whose lands and riches they then distributed among the peasants. The government was not strong enough to suppress the uprising. The peasant army crossed the country from the north to the south and stormed the large merchant city of *Guangzhou* (Canton). Having built up their army, the rebels moved north towards *Changan*, the country's capital. Their army was already 500,000-strong. At its approach, the emperor's troops dispersed in fear, and the emperor himself secretly fled the capital.

Upon entering the capital, the insurgents proclaimed Huang Chao emperor: they could not imagine any other state authority than that of an emperor. Huang Chao abolished the heavy taxes and ordered grain from the emperor's barns to be distributed among the poor. To save their wealth, the former emperor and feudal lords turned for help to the enemies of the Chinese people, the cruel nomads of the north. The people called them "black ravens". The nomads' cavalry forced its way into the capital and burned most of it down. Huang Chao was forced to leave Changan.

In 884 the rebels were dispersed, and their leader killed. But even after that, the peasants continued their armed struggle in various parts of the empire for 20 years.

During the peasant war, many feudal lords and officials were killed, and part of their land passed into the hands of the peasants. For a while, the condition of the people improved.

4. *The Struggle Against Foreign Invaders.* In the early 13th century, a state of nomadic *Mongols* was formed in the steppes

to the north of China. The Mongol nobility elected the cruel and power-hungry *Genghiz Khan* as ruler. He commanded a large and disciplined army which was used by the nobility to conquer and plunder rich neighbouring countries.

In 1211, the Mongol hordes invaded Northern China. They routed the Chinese troops and captured *Peking*, a large city in the north of the country. Over several decades, the Mongols conquered Central Asia, Iran, Transcaucasia, and Eastern Europe. Along with their western campaigns, they continued their conquest of China, but the people put up staunch resistance to the invaders. Only in 1279 did they manage to subjugate Southern China.

The devastation they caused was terrible. The invaders turned flourishing cities into ruins, trampled out crops, and killed and drove people into slavery. Where the Mongols passed nothing remained but the earth dug up by horses' hooves, and smouldering fires.

China became the principal part of the vast Mongol state. The Great Khan—the Mongol emperor—made Peking the capital. The population of China had to pay heavy duties. The Mongol nobility had seized large territories; part of the irrigated land was turned into pastures for their cattle. Chinese peasants were forced to turn their horses over to the army. Craftsmen were made to work for the Mongol khans without pay. The Chinese had no right to hold government posts in their own country. The conquerors were hated not only by the peasants and the craftsmen but by Chinese merchants and feudal lords as well.

In the mid-14th century, a peasant uprising against the Mongol rule began in the south of the country. It came to be known as the *revolt of the Red Turbans*, because its participants



Troops. Indian ink on silk

wore red head bands as a distinguishing sign. The peasants were joined by the townspeople. They killed Mongol officials and soldiers, opened town and city gates before the rebels and made weapons for them. The uprising developed into a war of liberation which lasted about 20 years. In 1368 the Mongols were routed and driven out of China.

The large estates taken away from the Mongol feudal lords became the property of the Chinese emperor again. The land was divided into plots and given over to peasants for use. Taxes and dues levied upon merchants and craftsmen were lowered. In the 15th century, after the country was liberated from Mongol rule, its economic development gained momentum.

? 1. What caused the peasant war of the 9th century in China? On the map, trace the route by the rebels. What facts show that the peasant war was hard fought? Why were the insurgents defeated? 2. Who in China took part in the campaign

against the Mongol invaders? What was the difference between the uprising of the Red Turbans and the uprising led by Huang Chao? 3. What were the common features of the feudal systems in China and in the Arab Caliphate?

§ 39. Chinese Economy and Culture

(Map No. 12)

1. *The Development of the Crafts.* Chinese cities mushroomed along major trade routes, on river banks and by the sea. They were surrounded by high stone walls. The central streets were wide and paved with stone. Here, amidst the greenery, stood the feudal lords' palaces and the temples.

In the Middle Ages, China began to produce more silk, a fabric used to make clothes and sails, umbrellas and strings for musical instruments. Silk embroideries depicting scenes from fairy tales and landscapes were also made. The embroiderers were so skilful in selecting shades of silk threads that the ornaments were barely distinguishable from painting.

The Chinese were the first to begin producing *china*. It was made from a mixture of certain kinds of clay and minerals. Chinaware is semi-transparent against the light and gives a melodious sound when tapped on. Chinese craftsmen said that chinaware should "glitter like a mirror, be as thin as paper, melodious as a gong and smooth and sparkling as a lake on a sunny day". The production of china required much exper-

What were the cultural achievements of the Chinese people in Antiquity?



Manufacture of
chinaware. Chinese
drawing

ience and consummate skill: the slightest mistake could ruin the precious article.

Craftsmen turned articles made of bronze, ivory and rare wood into beautiful works of art. Vases, bowls and small boxes were covered with engraving and drawings, and inlaid with precious stones.

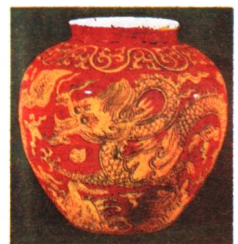
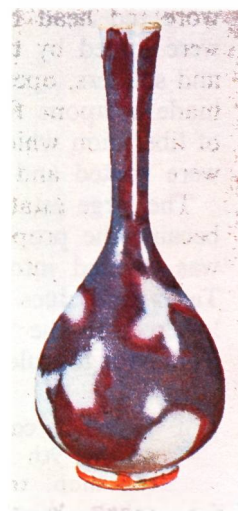
The Chinese learned to use coal in iron smelting. Craftsmen developed better furnaces and began to produce more metal.

2. *Trade and Navigation.* Merchants sold the craftsmen's wares in different parts of China and abroad. To make transportation easier, a 1,700-km-long *Grand Canal* was built. It linked the rivers Yangtze and Huang Ho and connected them with the southeastern sea coast. The canal was used not only for transportation but for irrigation as well.

Chinese caravans moved to Central Asia, Iran and Byzantium along the Great Silk Route. The journey to the Mediterranean coast was long and arduous, taking the caravans two or three years. Cargoes changed hands several times and were carried by horses and camels in turn.

China conducted brisk maritime trade with the countries lying along the coast of the Indian Ocean. The coastal cities of China were visited by merchants from distant countries. Arabs built permanent trade settlements in its southern ports.

The Chinese wanted to control the sea route along Asia's southern coast. To achieve this goal, in the early 15th century the emperor sent seven consecutive expeditions led by an old sea hand, *Cheng Ho*. The Chinese fleet reached the *Sunda* and the *Molucca Islands* (Indonesia), India, Iran and the south of Arabia. During one of the voyages, the travellers approached the eastern coast of Africa. Cheng Ho's expeditions promoted the development of navigation and acquainted the Chinese with



Chinese vases. 10th-
11th centuries

other countries.

3. *Inventions.* The Chinese learned to print books. At first the printers carved the text out on smooth wooden boards, covered the hieroglyphics with Indian ink and pressed the boards against paper. Each new text had to be carved out separately. As the boards were often moistened with ink, they soon swelled and cracked. In the 11th century, modular type was invented which consisted of separate hieroglyphics.

In the 8th century, a newspaper called *The Capital Herald* began to be published in China. It was printed off boards, and contained the emperor's edicts and reports about major events.

Gunpowder was also invented in China. Initially it was used for fireworks, subsequently in warfare.

In the 11th century Chinese sailors began using the *compass*, which had been invented in antiquity. With the help of the magnetic needle, they were able to accurately determine direction in open sea.

4. *Education and Science.* To rule the vast country, the government needed literate people. Children of feudal lords and merchants attended town schools. To get a government job, it was necessary to pass a complicated exam.

Textbooks on the construction of irrigation installations, on agriculture and other subjects were published. Ancient manuscripts were carefully preserved and copied in libraries. In the 7th century, the emperor's library contained approximately 90,000 volumes.

Chinese physicians used a great number of medicines made out of herbs. They could perform complicated operations. Small-pox inoculation was a great achievement of Chinese medicine.

The Chinese were greatly interested in the history of their country, as is shown by their proverb "Do not forget the past, it is a guide for the future". The works of ancient historians were collected and copied. During the reign of each emperor, his edicts and other documents were collected and preserved to make work easier for future historians.

Travel to distant lands promoted the development of geography. Chinese travellers visited many countries. Sailors made detailed maps of the coast of Southeast Asia.

5. *Literature and Art.* The 8th-9th centuries are known as the golden age of Chinese poetry. Some poets raised their voices in protest against the suffering and poverty of the people, the extravagance of the emperor's court and the horrors of war.



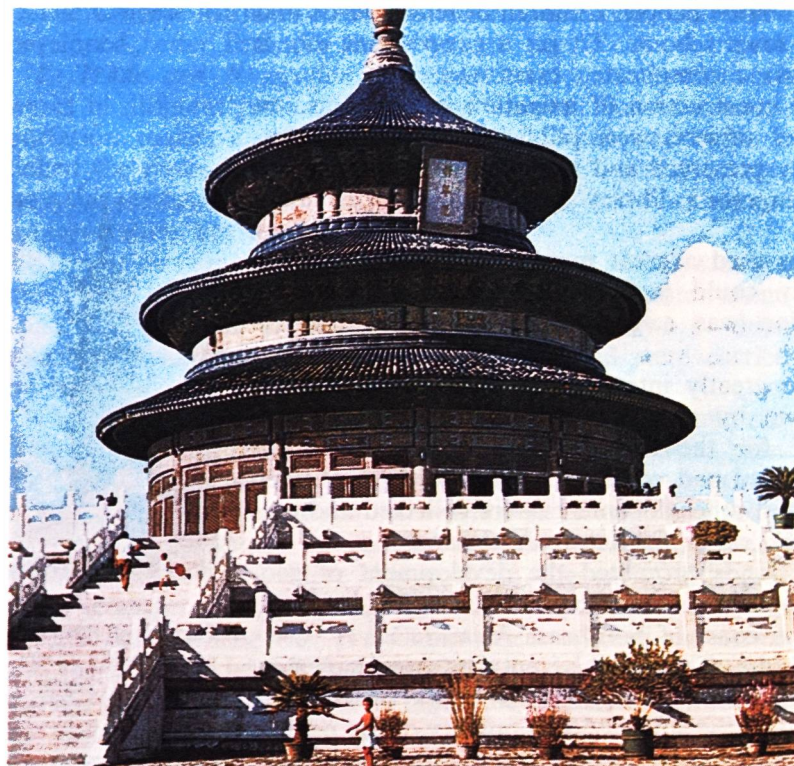
Pagoda of the Dragon's Beauty (*Shanghai, 15th century*)
The height of the pagoda is over 50 metres.



Birds in bamboo grove. Painted on silk (12th century)



An old man. Statuette (11th-12th centuries)



Temple of the Sky in Peking (15th century)

The poet *Du Fu*, who lived in the 8th century, wrote with sadness and anger about deserted villages and the fate of women and children doomed to starvation. He boldly defended the peasants fighting against the feudal nobility.

Emperors and rich feudal lords commissioned architects to build castles and *pagodas*—temples which looked like tall many-tiered towers. The materials used were wood, stone, bronze and iron. Chinese structures were decorated with intricate engraving. The high, curved roofs and wide ledges made the buildings seem light and soaring.

Painters were trained at special schools. Chinese artists used colours or Indian ink, drawing their pictures on long silk or paper scrolls. They painted animals and birds, as well as *landscapes*—natural scenery. The Chinese called landscapes “mountains and waters”. Nature was shown as a fairy-tale world, joyful and full of light. Subsequently, the artists started to use black Indian ink to draw fruit, delicate flowers and leaves, animals and birds. These drawings were called “flowers and birds”. Exhibitions of the best works of art were often held in the capital.

In the Middle Ages, the Chinese made great progress in science, technology and art.

- ? 1. Which crafts were developed in China? 2. What did the Chinese achieve in the Middle Ages in science and technology? 3. What are the characteristic features of Chinese architecture and painting?

§ 40. The Feudal System in India

(Map No. 12)

1. *The Feudal Order.* In the 6th-7th centuries, the feudal system began to take root in India. The country was divided into up to 70 independent principalities. The princes—*rajahs*—lived among courtiers, top officials and generals in magnificent palaces.

Land was considered the property of the state, and rulers collected tax from the peasants for using it. The rajah gave part of the land, along with the peasants living on it, to his relatives and courtiers in exchange for military service. The owner of the land, who collected taxes from the population, was

obliged to maintain detachments of mercenaries which formed the prince's army. The size of the tax was fixed by the prince's officials.

A great deal of land belonged to *Brahmans* (priests), temples and monasteries. At first the princes gave them empty lands; later, they received entire villages with peasants. As a rule, lands belonging to temples and monasteries were not taxed.

2. *The Indian Village*. Even under the feudal system, the peasants continued to live in neighbour communities. The community was governed by a council consisting of village people held in highest esteem. The community repaired irrigation canals and dams, distributed land and settled disputes among peasants. Community members jointly defended the village from enemy attacks.

Arable land was divided among families. Near the plots were pens for cattle and areas for threshing. Guards were stationed at watchtowers to chase birds and wild animals away from the crops. A shepherd drove the peasants' cattle to the woods to graze. Nearly everything that the peasants needed was produced within the community: food, clothes, cooking utensils, tableware, and tools. The community set aside part of the harvest to pay blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, potters, the shepherd and guards.

The village elder and scribe were in a position distinct from that of the other community members. They apportioned taxes and were therefore very influential. Apart from their usual plot, large parcels of land which were not taxed were given to them for maintenance. Often, they received gifts from ordinary community members.

The whole community was responsible for the payment of taxes. The princes sent peasants to repair and build roads, fortresses, palaces and temples.

It was not easy for the isolated communities to unite in a common struggle against feudal oppression. Attempted uprisings usually ended in failure. The peasants fled from their villages. Chroniclers often mention groups of robbers hiding in the jungle and in the mountains.

3. *The Castes*. By the Middle Ages, India still retained the ancient division into *castes*—large isolated groups of people with certain rights, duties and customs passed on from generation to generation.

The position at the very top belonged to the "purest" castes of *Brahmans* and the military nobility; next came the caste of merchants and money-lenders. The caste of the *Sudras*,

who in ancient times were servants, now included craftsmen and peasants. The lowest caste was that of the “untouchables”. It was believed that even the shadow or a glance of an “untouchable” could defile a man belonging to an upper caste. The “untouchables” had to draw water from special wells and were buried separately.

Relations between the castes were complicated. For instance, the caste of blacksmiths was considered to be higher than the caste of potters, while the tanners were among the “untouchables”. New castes emerged with the appearance of new crafts. The rich sections of the population usually belonged to higher castes, and the poor to lower castes. Still, some particularly enterprising people were able to move up to a higher caste.

All the activities of the caste were regulated by the elders and the caste council. Expulsion from a caste was a severe punishment: the expelled person lost the right to protection, family and property.

During the Middle Ages, division into castes consolidated the feudal system.

4. *The Hindu Religion.* During the transition to feudalism, the *Hindu religion*, or *Hinduism*, became established in India. It united a great number of local faiths. The chief gods of Hinduism were *Shiva* and *Vishnu*, who were considered the creators of the world and its guardians. In honour of these gods, temples were built and sacrifices made. Temple priests “fed” and “gave water” to the statue of the god, and temple dancers performed ritual dances in front of it. In honour of the gods, feasts were held at temples at which great numbers of believers assembled.

Hinduism told its followers to avoid harming living creatures, donate part of their property to Brahmins and temples, and



Temple in Orissa on the eastern coast of Central India (11th century)

to unquestioningly perform all the duties of the caste. The Hindus believed that the amount of time a soul spent in heaven or hell depended only on how good or bad the person had been in his lifetime. Afterwards, the soul returned to the earth to inhabit another body. Thus the position of each person in society depended on his or her behaviour in the previous existence. If a man was good, he would be reborn to a higher caste, and for bad deeds he would be born anew as an "untouchable" or even as a repulsive animal. Therefore, the Brahmins said, it was only fair that even good men had to suffer: that was their punishment for misbehaving in their previous existence.

In this way, Hinduism dissuaded common people from struggle and justified the division into castes and the existing system.

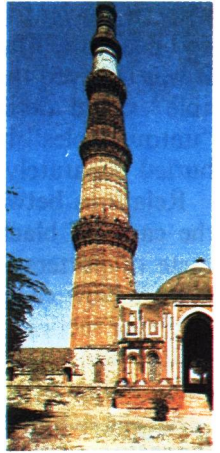
Among the people, movements arose which expressed the discontent of the oppressed with the caste system. Itinerant preachers said that all people were born equal. They denounced the caste system and condemned the Brahmins. Some of them also renounced wealth and urged the people to be honest and hard-working. The preachers presented their teaching in the form of hymns.

5. *Harsha's Empire and Feudal Fragmentation.* At times, a ruler managed to unite some part of the country. In the 7th century, *Harsha*, the ruler of one of the northern principalities, amassed a huge army. For six years, as a chronicler put it, the elephants never stopped wearing their harness, nor the soldiers their helmets. Harsha conquered the whole of northern India. But his attempts to move south faced the stubborn resistance of the rulers of the southern principalities and ended in failure.

Harsha's empire existed for about 30 years and fell apart after his death. For several centuries afterwards, India remained split into a multitude of states. The rajahs waged incessant wars, entered into unstable alliances, then became enemies again.

Weakened by internecine wars, the country was easy prey for conquerors. In the early 8th century, the Arabs conquered Sind—part of western India, and ruled it for many years. Beginning in the 9th century, India suffered from incursions of Muslims from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Their campaigns were conducted under the banner of a Holy War against "the infidels".

After the Baghdad Caliphate fell apart, a strong Muslim state was formed on the territory of today's Afghanistan with



Minaret Kutb-Minar, Delhi (13th century)



Dancing god. Bronze, 10th-11th centuries

the capital in the town of *Ghazni*. Its ruler, *Mahmud* (998-1030) made forays into India almost every year, burning down and plundering nearly all of the northwestern region of the country. Mahmud seized valuables to decorate his capital and drove the local people away to be sold into slavery. He added *Punjab*, a region in the north of India, to his possessions.

For many centuries, India remained a fragmented country. Internecine wars and invasions brought untold suffering to the Indian people.

A 7th-Century Chinese Traveller's Impressions of India

Cities. The towns and villages have gates. The city walls are thick and high. The streets and lands form an intricate pattern, and the roads are winding. The main streets are dirty. Both sides of the streets are lined with tradesmen's stalls. Butchers, fishermen, dancers, sweepers and others like them live outside the town.

City walls are made mostly of brick or tile, and the towers on the walls—of wood or bamboo. The houses have wooden balconies and porches. The walls of the houses are coated with clay or lime and support tiled roofs.

Castes. The families in India are divided into four classes (castes). The first class is made up of Brahmins. These are people of pure conduct who strictly observe the rules prescribed by religion. The second class includes *Kshatriyas* (warriors). For centuries, they have remained the ruling class. The people of the third class are called *Vaisyas*. They are traders who look for profit both in their own country and abroad. The people of the fourth class are called *Sudras* and cultivate land.

The king's family and the army. The right to inherit the throne belongs to *Kshatriyas* alone. Occasionally they come to power through unlawful conquests and bloodshed.

The chief warriors in the country are selected from the bravest men. As the sons inherit the profession of their fathers, they master the military art very quickly. These warriors live near the king's castle and form the vanguard when troops are on the march. India's army comprises infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. The elephants are protected with strong armour, and sharp blades are fastened to their trunks. The commander rides in a chariot.

The cavalry is placed in the front to repel attacks. Defence is ensured by the infantry which is very mobile. Men of courage and strength, the foot soldiers are armed with long lances and large shields. Sometimes they also carry swords and sabres.

- ? 1. What were the common features of the feudal system in India and in the Arab Caliphate? (See § 14.2) What were the differences? 2. Compare the position of peasants in India and in Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages (see §§ 5-6). What did they have in common? How were they different? 3. How did Hinduism and the division into castes strengthen and support the existing system? 4. What invasions into India took place in the 8th-11th centuries? Why, in your opinion, did they originate mostly in the north-west? (See the map.)

§ 41. The Muslim States in India

(Map No. 12)

1. *The Formation of the Sultanate of Delhi.* In the early 13th century, the territories owned by Muslim feudal lords in the north of India were united into a *sultanate* with the capital in *Delhi*. Its rulers, sultans, established their authority over the greater part of India.

After the Muslim conquest, the feudal system developed even further. All land was considered to be the property of the sultan. He also acquired the lands of the Hindu feudal lords who were exiled or killed in wars. Some of the local landowners retained their possessions by pledging allegiance to the sultan and agreeing to pay a tax into the treasury.

The peasants had to pay taxes for the whole of the cultivated land. The tax for part of the land was collected by officials and went to the sultan's treasury. The rest of the land was distributed by the sultan among Muslim feudal lords for temporary use. The size of the estate of each feudal lord corresponded to his military position. The feudal lord collected taxes from the territory he controlled and used the money to hire a military unit consisting of from one to ten thousand soldiers. At the sultan's order, his force took part in military campaigns. At first, the feudal lords were not allowed to bequeath the land given to them by the sultan. After a promotion or a demotion, they were transferred from one region to another.

The Muslims formed the top section of the Sultanate's

population: they were the soldiers, officials and landowners. The bulk of the peasants, craftsmen and merchants were Hindus. All non-Muslims had to pay a poll-tax; their rights were limited. Many locals converted to Islam in order to avoid the poll-tax and to move to a higher caste. Thus, a large Muslim population appeared in India. In some regions, for instance in *Bengal*, Muslims were in the majority.

2. *The Might of the Sultanate. The Struggle Against the Mongols.* The Sultanate of Delhi became involved in a long war with the Mongols who occupied the territory up to the River Indus to the north and west of India. The Mongols made frequent raids into North India. The threat of an invasion made the Muslim feudal lords rally around the sultan.

Decisive victory in the struggle against the Mongols was achieved under the Sultan *Ali al-Din Khilji* (1296-1316). This talented general and energetic ruler raised the wages of the Muslim soldiers. To provide the troops with food, he forbade increases in food prices in town markets; officials severely punished tradesmen for cheating. The sultan ordered that the peasants pay taxes in grain alone and obliged merchants to haul the grain to huge barns in Delhi. The tax levied on the Hindus was raised from a quarter to a half of the harvest. A contemporary said that each pearl in the sultan's crown was a hardened tear of blood shed by a poor peasant.

The harsh measures enabled the sultan to amass an army half a million strong. The Mongol invaders were repelled and routed. After 1306, they never returned to India.

Ali al-Din Khilji undertook several campaigns to the south; his generals conquered nearly all of Hindustan. The subjugated rulers of *Deccan* became vassals of the sultan and paid him annual tribute. Under Ali al-Din, the Sultanate of Delhi became a large state with a strong army.

But even at that time, it was not a centralised state. Some of the sultan's lieutenant governors staged rebellions. Bengal was fragmented and ruled by its own princes.

3. *The Disintegration of the Sultanate of Delhi.* Little by little, the feudal lords became full owners of the lands given to them by the sultan. Beginning in the mid-14th century, independent states—*Deccan*, *Bengal*, and *Gujarat* in the west—broke away from the Sultanate.

The final blow to the enfeebled Sultanate of Delhi was dealt in 1398 by Tamerlane, the ruler of Samarkand in Central Asia. Tamerlane's soldiers took Delhi and spent several days looting the city and killing the townspeople. At the cruel

ruler's order, 100,000 prisoners were put to death. To intimidate the Hindus, Tamerlane has almost all the inhabitants of the conquered regions killed, and pyramids built with their skulls. He returned to Samarkand laden with booty and bringing a great number of prisoners. After his invasion, famine and epidemics raged in the north of India for many years.

By the middle of the 15th century, only a small area around Delhi remained under the sultan's rule. The country was wrecked by internecine discord, was in a state of havoc. Groups of courtiers fought for power, staging coups for the benefit of those members of the sultan's family who suited their purposes. Incessant wars with the recalcitrant feudal lords characterised the reigns of the last sultans.

4. *The States of Central and South India.* Deccan did not remain long within the Sultanate of Delhi. In the mid-14th century, a Muslim state governed by the *Bahmani* dynasty was established there by rebellious generals. Its territory stretched across the north of Deccan from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal.

The rulers of this state were extremely bellicose. To maintain a mercenary army and a magnificent court, they imposed high taxes on the peasants. Upon visiting the Bahmani state the Russian traveller Afanasy Nikitin wrote: "The land is very populous; the rural people are poor while the noblemen are rich and live in luxury." The Bahmani state was not very solid and was further weakened due to the strife between the feudal lords. By the early 16th century, it was split into five independent principalities.

A state headed by Hindu feudal lords, *Vijayanagar*, emerged in the south of Deccan. Almost incessantly, it had to fight off its northern neighbours. The capital of Vijayanagar was surrounded by several walls and protected by mountains. Bahmani troops besieged it many times but failed to capture it.

Incessant conflicts with northern neighbours and internecine wars weakened the state. In 1565, united forces of the Muslim principalities defeated the Vijayanagar troops and destroyed the capital. The greater part of the state's territory was divided among its neighbours.

5. *The Mogul Empire.* In the fragmented country torn apart by wars, the people came to realise more and more clearly how necessary it was to unite.

In 1526, a new conqueror, *Babar*, invaded India. Chased out of Central Asia by Uzbeks, he captured Afghan lands and



Babar receives a foreign ambassador.
Miniature illustrating Babar-nameh (17th century)

settled in the town of *Kabul*. His troops, recruited from among the Central Asian population and Afghani tribes, had a strong artillery and a cavalry which was successful in surprise attacks. Babar defeated the army of the last Sultan of Delhi, then smashed the alliance of Indian princes and took Delhi. A state was formed in the north of India, which the Europeans called the *Mogul Empire*.*

The greatest of the Mogul emperors was *Akbar* (1556-1605). He expanded the state, conquering Gujarat, Sind and *Baluchistan* in the west, *Kashmir* in the north and Bengal in the east. The Mogul army entered Deccan, but its successes there were modest. Independent Hindu principalities continued to exist in the south of the peninsula. Internecine wars stopped for a

* The word Moguls had come to mean not only Mongols but also the Muslim princes ruling conquered territories who became related with Mongols, i.e., all descendants of Genghiz Khan.

while and the crafts and trade prospered in an India united under the Mogul rule.

Akbar realised that if he were to rule India successfully he had to win support from both Muslims and Hindus. To do this, he declared universal peace, putting an end to the persecution of non-Muslims and abolishing the poll-tax. Thus he secured the assistance of the Hindu princes, and the Hindu cavalry joined his army. The activities of Akbar caused dissatisfaction of some of the Muslim clergy and feudal nobility. The church pronounced him a heretic and led an uprising against him which he managed to suppress with great difficulty.

After the victory over the rebels, Akbar tried to introduce a new religion at his court. It was to unite everything that he found sensible in Islam and Hinduism. But the religion became popular among the common folk rather than among the nobility. The clergy continued to put up a resistance, and Akbar began to exile his opponents. The new religion did not take root, but Akbar's wish to instil religious tolerance was very important.

The country's unity under the Moguls was not very stable. Although Akbar's successors expanded the territory of the empire, the army grew weaker. Feudal lords launched rebellions and internecine wars for the throne. The struggle against Indian princes in the south, the construction of palaces and mosques, and the luxurious way of life of the rulers exhausted revenues. Taxes were constantly being raised; farmers were ruined and fled to the forests and mountains; peasant fields were not cultivated and were soon overgrown with jungle. In the 17th century, the Mogul Empire began to decline.

- ? 1. What were the characteristic features of the feudal system in the Sultanate of Delhi? What steps were taken to rebuff the Moguls' incursions? 2. Why did the Sultanate of Delhi disintegrate? Were the reasons similar to those of the disintegration of the Arab Caliphate? What was the difference? 3. How was the Mogul Empire formed? How do you evaluate Akbar's reign? 4. Make up a chronological table of the main events of India's history.

§ 42. Cultural Development

1. *A Country of Fabulous Wealth.* According to Oriental lore, India was a country of countless riches. In the West, people told legends about the treasures of Indian princes.

The wealth of India was created by the labour of its people. Peasants dug canals and irrigated arid lands. Thanks to the warm climate and a great deal of rain, the land yielded two or three crop harvests a year. Peasants grew rice, millet, wheat, a great variety of fruits and vegetables, spices, melons and gourds, cotton, sugar cane and mulberry. Many of these crops and fruit, specifically rice, cotton and sugar cane, spread to other countries from India.

Indian craftsmen were renowned for their skill. Jewellers crafted artistic gold and silver vessels with intricate chasing and engraving, and were skilled at polishing precious stones. Articles made from ivory and valuable wood were sold at high prices. Using very simple looms, weavers produced fabrics that were thin as gossamer; these were called "evening dew" and "flowing water".

The sultans of Delhi maintained large workshops where thousands of craftsmen produced articles for the court.

2. *Contacts with Other Countries.* Many ports appeared on the western coast of Hindustan: *Cambay, Surat, Cochin* and others. The largest among them was *Calicut*: its ruler had a large fleet and bore the title of "the ruler of the world". The cities, which enjoyed self-government up to the 14th century, conducted brisk maritime trade. One document states that merchants from those cities crossed the sea from coast to coast.

Merchants living in the same city and in the same region formed unions which were quite influential. In the ports, local and imported goods were sold at lively, crowded bazaars. Merchants from China, Africa and Arabia travelled to India to buy fabrics, spices, dyes, ivory, valuable types of wood, jewellery and carvings. India's primary trading partners were Arabian merchants. They established control over the trade routes in the Indian Ocean and had permanent settlements in Indian ports.

Europeans had long desired to reach the fabulously rich India. One of the first Europeans to visit India was the Russian merchant *Afanasy Nikitin*. He undertook a long and dangerous journey through the Caucasus and Iran and reached India in 1469. After staying there for three years he returned home and wrote an interesting and accurate account of his trip *Journey Beyond the Three Seas*.

3. *Science.* The centres of learning were monasteries and temples at which universities were opened. At times hundreds and even thousands of students lived and studied there. The

university established at Harsh was famous far beyond the borders of India.

One of the best-developed sciences was mathematics. As far back as the first centuries A.D., Indian scholars used the decimal system, and Indian numerals, now used throughout the world. Mathematicians knew how to work with fractions and calculate area and volume. *Aryabhata*, an Indian mathematician and astronomer who lived in the early 6th century, described a number of mathematical rules and determined the value of π (pi) with a high degree of accuracy. He also advanced the brilliant idea that the earth is a globe which revolves around its axis. A number of medieval Indian cities had observatories.

Medical books described the anatomy of the human body and its organs in great detail. Indian doctors performed complicated surgery, using anaesthetics and up to 200 instruments. To diagnose an illness, they took the patient's body temperature and pulse, and examined the skin and tongue. They used a great number of tinctures, decoctions and ointments as medicines. Indian doctors were renowned throughout the Orient.

The development of chemistry was promoted by the manufacture of dyes, perfumes, medicines and alloys.

4. *Literature.* In the early Middle Ages, court poets who glorified the deeds of rulers, usually wrote in *Sanskrit*, an ancient literary language which the common people did not understand.

Beginning in the 12th century, some Indian peoples began to create works of literature in the vernacular languages. The sermons of itinerant preachers, verse and collections of folk fairy tales were written in these languages.

Under the Moguls, the poet *Tulsi Das* wrote *Ramayana*, an epic poem in Hindi based on an ancient legend. The popular epic was read at village festivals. Historical and biographical works written in the 16th century are widely known. Babar, a talented poet and prose writer, wrote *Babar-nameh* (the Book of Babar); *Akbar-nameh* was written by one of the emperor's courtiers.

5. *Art.* Indian architecture was characterised by a great variety of styles. Many medieval temples and palaces have been preserved to this day.

In the 6th-8th centuries, cave temples were hewn out of rocks. Such temples were built in *Ajanta* and *Ellora* (both in Central India), and on the *Elephanta Island* (near the western coast of



Fresco in Ajanta temple (8th century)

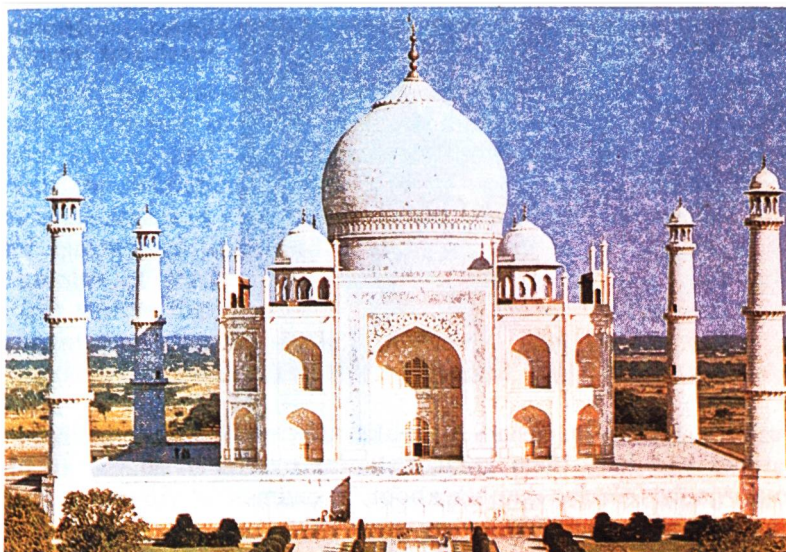
Hindustan). The builders found it easier to make a cave temple than to cut stones and haul them great distances over bad roads. The famous Ajanta temples number about 30 chambers built in the course of nine centuries.

Cave temples were decorated with stone reliefs, statues and *frescos*. Ajanta frescos depict scenes from the life of princes, courtiers and townspeople, and illustrate historical events or legends. In the temple of Elephanta there is a 6-metre-high representation of the three-faced Shiva.

Beginning in the 8th century, temples were built from cut stones and shaped like tall towers. Each ruler wanted to become famous for the structures built during his reign. In some places, for instance in *Orissa* (Central India), whole temple townships emerged which were surrounded by thick stone walls. In the north of India, the temples were oval and elongated, while in the south, they looked like rectangular pyramids.

Inside the temples were low-ceilinged, dark rooms, admission to which was restricted. Most believers could just walk around the temple. The walls were richly decorated with reliefs, statues and carving, depicting scenes from legends and tales. Artists were very skilled at sculpting animals: near the temples, one finds life-like statues of horses and elephants.

In the 13th century, Indian architecture was strongly influenced by Muslim art; rulers built palaces, mosques and magnificent tombs—*mausoleums*. These structures were unusual for India: they had no sculptures and were distinguished by their proportion and purity of line. Muslim buildings combined Indian carved decorations with the arches, cupolas and minarets typical of Arab architecture. *Taj Mahal*, located in the town of *Agra* not far from Delhi, is the mausoleum of the



Taj Mahal (Agra, first half of the 17th century)

favourite wife of one of the Mogul emperors. This striking building is famous all over the world.

Painting also flourished at the time of the Moguls. The first Mogul emperors, connoisseurs of art, invited painters from Iraq, Iran and Central Asia to their court. The painters illustrated books of ancient legends, collections of folk tales and historical works with colourful miniatures. They painted portraits depicting even the tiniest details with great accuracy.

Medieval Indian art absorbed the best artistic achievements of different countries of the East and, in turn, affected the development of art in many countries.

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|---|--|
| <p>1. Why did agriculture, the crafts and trade reach a high level of development in medieval India?</p> <p>2. What were the achievements of Indian science adopted by other peoples?</p> | <p>architecture. What characteristic features do Hindu and Muslim buildings have?</p> <p>4. What do you think about the frescos from Ajanta and miniatures from Babar-nameh?</p> |
|---|--|

CONCLUSION TO PART TWO

- 1. Why was the feudal system a higher stage in the development of mankind than the slave-owning system?*

The second period of the Middle Ages, which lasted from the 11th century to the end of the 15th century, was the time of the *full development of the feudal system*. The slave-owning system still existed in the countries situated around the Mediterranean Sea and in the valleys of big Asian rivers, while the feudal system was established in many countries of different continents. In the Middle Ages, the economy and culture made another step forward.

Peasants working on their small farms made better use of their tools and land than slaves toiling on their masters' estates. The methods of land cultivation were gradually improving: new lands were ploughed, the three-field system was spreading, as was the use of iron tools, wheeled ploughs and wind- and water-mills. With improved cultivation, the land yielded better harvests. Labour productivity in agriculture was gradually rising.

In the Middle Ages, the crafts also reached a higher level of development than in Antiquity. In Europe, old cities came back to life and new ones were springing up. The cities grew to become centres of the crafts, trade and culture. The number of crafts increased, and craftsmen were producing a great variety of high-quality goods.

The growing division of labour led to the development of trade. The exchange of goods between the town and the countryside and among the countries' regions was increasing. Subsistence economy still prevailed, but it was gradually declining.

2. *How did the people's life change during the second period in the Middle Ages?* Higher labour productivity produced new methods of exploitation of dependent peasants: corvée and rent in kind were being replaced by money rent. In some countries, feudal lords began to set their peasants free from personal bondage for quit-rent.

As the feudal system developed, the class struggle grew more acute. Peasant uprisings and wars involved large areas and even whole countries. The town poor supported the peasant rebels in their struggle against the feudal lords.

The growth of cities and development of trade paved the way for the formation of centralised states. It was to the advantage of the townspeople to overcome feudal fragmentation. The feudal lords, and especially the lesser nobility, also supported centralised monarchies, which they needed to suppress the powerful peasant movements. The countries' unification went hand in hand with the consolidation of royal

What changes occurred in agriculture in the Middle Ages? What caused them?

What progress did the crafts make?

Why did subsistence economy begin to decline?

How did the growth of labour productivity and the development of the crafts and trade affect the condition of peasants?

Why was class struggle intensified at that time?

Why did centralised states emerge?

What part was played by the assemblies of representatives of the estates in the strengthening of the king's authority?

authority.

Although the monarchs now had more authority, they still needed the support of the estates. They had the backing of such representative assemblies as Parliament in England and the Estates General in France. The rich townspeople now had a certain influence over the affairs of the state.

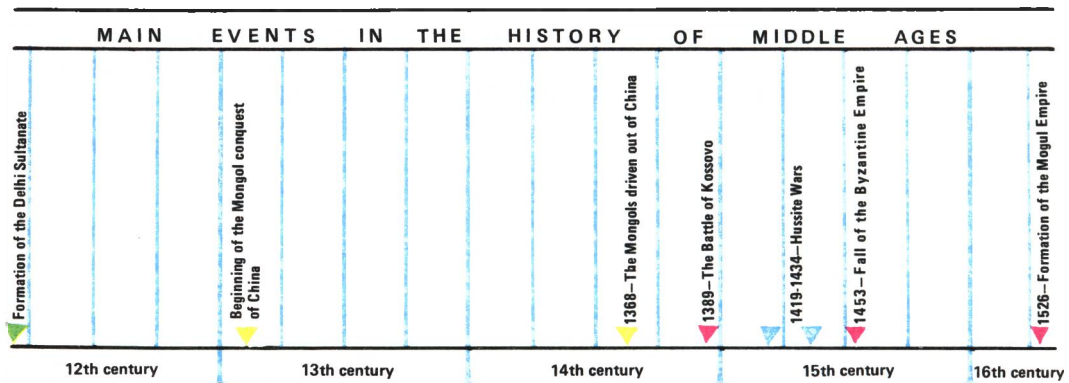
In the Middle Ages, the church was the biggest landowner and the mainstay of the feudal system. In the period of feudal fragmentation it was the only organised force in Europe. But as the monarchy became stronger, the influence of the church on state affairs gradually weakened.

Nor did it influence the cultural life of the European peoples as it had before. The growth of cities, increased trade between countries, and the formation of centralised states promoted cultural development. In big cities, schools and universities were opening. Gradually, a store of scientific knowledge was accumulated. Architects learned to build elaborate structures; painters and sculptors were able to better convey man's thoughts and feelings in their works. This prepared the way for a new upsurge in cultural development in the late Middle Ages.

How can you explain the might of the church in Europe in the 11th-13th centuries?

What promoted the development of culture in the 11th-15th centuries?

What headway was made by education, science and the arts?



PART THREE

The Feudal System Begins to Decline. Capitalist Relations Take Shape



CHAPTER 11

GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES OF THE LATE 15th-EARLY 16th CENTURIES. NEW COLONIES

In the 16th and the first half of the 17th century, the feudal system was still predominant. In the more advanced West European countries, however, capitalist enterprises were appearing. Geographical discoveries were a powerful impetus to capitalist production.

§ 43. The Development of Technology in the 15th-16th Centuries

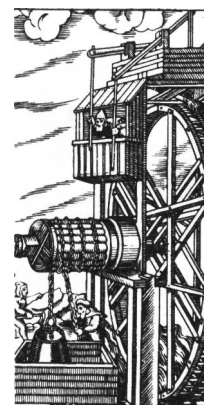
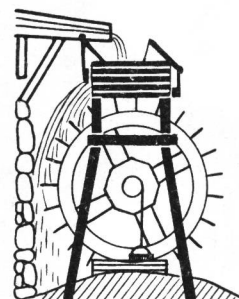
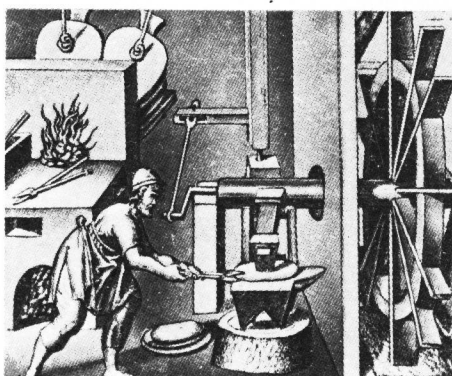
1. *Improved Water Wheel.* Little by little, peasants and craftsmen accumulated know-how and improved their tools. In the 15th-16th centuries great improvements were made in the development of machinery and technology.

The *water wheel* was introduced in mining and the crafts. Water wheels which set the heavy millstones in motion had long been used on mills. The lower part of the wheel was immersed in a stream of water; this kind of wheel was called the *undershot wheel*.

Later, the *overshot wheel*, set in motion by the force of falling water, was invented. A dam raised the level of river water which ran through a specially built chute onto the wheel.

A smithy with a water engine. 16th-century engraving

Water-raising machine. 16th-century engraving





Musketeer

The smelting of ore
in furnaces. 15th-
century engraving

The wheel revolved and turned a shaft which went into the workshop through a hole in the wall.

In metal processing, the wheel was used to set in motion a hammer weighing up to one ton. In paper manufacturing, the wheel raised and lowered the presses, and in mining, took the ore out and bailed out water from the mines. This made it possible to dig deeper mines.

2. *Improvements in Metallurgy.* Important improvements were introduced in smelting and metal processing. Previously, hand-operated bellows were used to pump air into the furnace. The temperature in the furnace was too low to make the metal melt completely, and the unsmelted iron settled at the bottom of the furnace. To make iron strong, it was hammered.

Beginning in the 14th century, large *blast furnaces*, 3 to 4 metres high, were built. The water wheel was linked up with large bellows which blew a large amount of air into the furnace with great force. Thus, temperatures high enough to melt iron ore were reached. When the metal grew cooler, it turned into cast iron which could be smelted into iron and steel. The production of iron in such new furnaces greatly increased.

3. *Military Equipment.* Cast and smelted iron were required to make firearms. In the 16th century, both heavy siege cannons and light field cannons were used. Small firearms were also improved. Heavy rifles—*muskets*—were invented. They were fired from a support and were quite accurate at 150-200 paces.

Cannons and guns were cast in special molds, and the barrel

bores were made with the help of drilling presses.

The invention of firearms radically changed warfare. Armour no longer guaranteed protection as bullets pierced right through it. Castle walls were no longer unassailable as they could be destroyed by cannonballs. *Heavy cavalry consisting of knights was replaced by mercenary infantry carrying firearms.*

4. *The Development of Navigation and Shipbuilding.* For a long time, Europeans could not muster the courage to venture on long voyages in the open sea. Without accurate maps and navigation instruments to help guide their small ships, they sailed only in the seas washing Europe. At sea, ships could determine their location only by the stars in good weather.



Navigator establishing position of a ship. *Book drawing, 16th century*

The navigator measures the angle between the North Star and the horizon to calculate the location of the ship.

Sailing in the open sea became safer with the invention of the *compass* and other instruments which made it possible to determine the location of the ship. Sailors were no longer afraid they would lose their way when far from shore.

In the 15th century, the Portuguese replaced their cumber-

Astrolabe, the instrument for measuring angles for the purpose of determining the position of the ship by the stars



Caravels



some old ships with light, swift sailing vessels called *caravels*. Caravels, very mobile and capacious, had three masts with square and fore-and-aft sails and could move in the required direction not only with the wind but also against it. Caravels could be used to make long journeys.

5. *The Invention of Printing*. With the development of the crafts and trade, literacy in towns began to spread. Schoolchildren and students needed books. Townspeople were beginning to display a great interest in literature, and the demand for books greatly increased.

By the late 14th century, the Europeans knew how to make paper, but books were still scarce. There were attempts to

How were manuscripts produced? Why did the number of manuscripts increase in the 12th-14th centuries?



Johann Gutenberg.
Portrait by an unknown artist (16th century)

Printing shop. 16th-century engraving

Making paper. 16th-century engraving

Book-binding shop. 16th-century engraving



make prints from wooden or copper plates, but this method was very inefficient.

It was not until the mid-15th century that *Johann Gutenberg* of Mainz (Germany) invented printing. After a great deal of effort, he manufactured *type* consisting of separate metallic letters. These he used to set the lines and pages of the text, from which prints on paper were made. The modular type made it possible to set as many pages of any text as necessary. Gutenberg also invented the *printing press*.

Around 1445 Gutenberg produced the first printed book, and printing quickly spread throughout Europe. Printing shops were opening in all countries. Library shelves were now filled with books on various fields of knowledge and in all European languages. The number of books increased; they were no longer as expensive as manuscripts used to be. The church was gradually losing its influence on education and science.

The invention of printing was one of the greatest discoveries in the history of mankind. Thanks to the printed book, knowledge began to spread quicker and was easier to pass on to the succeeding generation in full.

The important inventions made in the 15th-16th centuries could not be utilised in craftsmen's small workshops. Big enterprises which employed many people began to be built in Europe – large armouries, shipyards and printing shops.

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- | | |
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| 1. How was the water wheel improved? Where was it used? 2. What innovations were introduced in the smelting and processing of metals in the 14th-15th centuries? How did the improvements in metallurgy affect | the development of military equipment? 3. Why did it become possible to make long sea voyages in the 15th century? 4. What was Johann Gutenberg's invention? |
|--|--|

§ 44. The Discovery of the Sea Route to India. The Portuguese Colonies in Asia

(Map No. 13)

1. What Brought About the Geographical Discoveries. Thanks to the improvement of tools, the production of goods in the European countries increased. This led to a further expansion of trade. Greater quantities of precious metals were required for the minting of coins. But Europe had little gold: for

centuries, gold had been going to the East in exchange for expensive goods. That is why *in the 15th century Europeans began to send expeditions to distant countries in search of gold.*

Feudal lords and the town rich dreamed about great wealth. The Europeans were particularly attracted by India: they thought that if they could only get there, they would find untold riches. But trade with India and China was dominated by the Arabs, who resold expensive Oriental wares to Italian merchants at 8 or 10 times the price which they themselves paid. *European maritime merchants wanted to establish direct links with Asian countries so that they could profit from Oriental trade.*

After the Turks had captured Constantinople, it became even more difficult for the Europeans to trade with the Orient. The Turks had seized trade routes going through Asia Minor and Syria. The passage duties they charged were so high that it was unprofitable for merchants to take their wares through these countries. Oriental goods sold in Europe became even more expensive and rare. *Turkish conquests speeded up the search for new routes from Europe to Asia.*

2. *Voyages Along the Western Coast of Africa.* Portuguese and Spanish sailors were the first to venture into the ocean.

Along the Portuguese coast ran a major route from the Mediterranean to the North and Baltic seas. A great number of vessels called at Portuguese ports. Sea trade and fishing were the main occupations of the people living on the coastal strip. Fearless and skilful sailors grew up in fishermen's cabins.

Beginning in the early 15th century, the Portuguese sent regular expeditions to the Atlantic Ocean to explore Africa's western coast. The sailors were afraid to go too far south: medieval geographers reported that the sea boiled near the

Which goods did the Europeans get from the countries of the East?

Why was India believed to be a country of fabulous riches? Where did the trade routes to India run?



Map of the world,
Portugal, 1490

equator because of the heat and that life there was impossible. But, venturing farther to the south, the Portuguese finally reached the equator. There, the sailors saw lush tropical vegetation and strange animals.

The Portuguese bartered with blacks, receiving gold dust and ivory in exchange for cheap trinkets like colourful rags, beads and small mirrors. This was also the time when the despicable trade in "live goods"—slave trade—began. Europeans captured blacks by force and turned them into slaves. It is not without reason that parts of Africa's western coast came to be known as Slave Coast, Gold Coast and Ivory Coast.

A Portuguese expedition headed by *Bartholomeu Diaz* sailed around the southern extremity of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. But, exhausted by the long and arduous voyage, the sailors refused to go further. The Portuguese named the south African cape jutting out into the sea the *Cape of Good Hope*—the hope that the route to India would soon be discovered.

3. *The Voyage of Vasco da Gama*. The Portuguese government sent a new expedition led by *Vasco da Gama* in search of a sea route to India. Vasco da Gama, a courageous navigator, was a ruthless and power-hungry conqueror. His ships were specially equipped for the long voyage, had the best maps and instruments and crews of well-trained sailors.

After four and a half months of sailing, the Portuguese rounded the southern tip of Africa and reached its eastern coast, the first Europeans to do so. Storms and currents made sailing very difficult. The sailors suffered from tropical heat and died of diseases. In one of the Arab towns on the eastern



Drawing made from the Portuguese map of the world of 1490. Compare it to the picture of the original map. How did the Portuguese visualise the world?

coast of Africa, Vasco da Gama found an experienced pilot (sea-guide) who took his ships across the Indian Ocean.

In May 1498 the Portuguese ships anchored in the port of Calicut. Vasco da Gama told the sailors to buy up spices. But the Arab merchants who controlled trade with India induced the rajah—the ruler of Calicut—to arrest the Portuguese who had gone ashore. Vasco da Gama responded by detaining several Indian noblemen who were inspecting his ships. The rajah had to release the arrested sailors; he then sent boats for the Indians, but Vasco da Gama met the boats with cannon fire and refused to return the captives. Thus cannon salvos heralded the arrival of the first Europeans to India.

After loading their ships with spices, the Portuguese embarked on their homeward journey. By the end of the expedition, which lasted two years, over half of the sailors had died. But the spices they brought back fetched 60 times as much as was initially spent to equip the expedition.

4. *Portuguese Possessions in Asia.* The Portuguese king sent one flotilla after another to the Indian Ocean for the purpose of conquering and plundering the newly-discovered countries. The military equipment of the Portuguese was far superior to that of the Indian principalities: their vessels were faster and stronger, and their small, well-disciplined detachments had artillery and firearms.

But Portugal, a small country, was unable to conquer India and other densely populated Asian states. This is why the Portuguese turned to piracy. They looted and sank Arab and Indian ships and killed their crews or sold them into slavery. No ship could sail in the Indian Ocean without permission from the Portuguese. Capitalising on their superior weapons and ships, they completely ousted the Arabs from the Indian Ocean and seized the sea routes to India.

The Portuguese conquerors set Indian princes against one another and formed military alliances with some, against others. They stopped attempted resistance by bombarding port cities and then sending landing parties which looted and burned down settlements. In 1509, at the town of *Diu*, the Portuguese destroyed an allied Indian-Egyptian fleet consisting of 200 vessels.

The founder of permanent Portuguese possessions in Asia was the Viceroy *Alfonso de Albuquerque*, who possessed a vast amount of energy and more than his share of brutality. In India, Arabia and East Africa he seized the more important ports along the Indian Ocean coast, exterminated their popula-



Vasco da Gama.
16th-century engraving

tion and built fortresses. In India, people said that it was fortunate that the Portuguese were as few as tigers and lions, otherwise they would have exterminated the whole human race. The centre of Portuguese possessions in India was the city of *Goa*.

Albuquerque sent an expedition to the east. It captured the city of *Malacca* on the southern extremity of the *Malay Peninsula*, the centre of the spice trade. Then the Portuguese reached the Sunda and the Molucca Islands where the best spices were grown. Moving further east, they reached the shores of China and Japan.

Indian princes were obliged to sell all the spices they had grown to the Portuguese. The latter also bought up—for a song—the spices grown by the peasants, and forced the princes to pay tributes. The conquerors made enormous profits from the trade in Oriental wares. To keep prices high, they brought only about 5 or 6 shiploads of spices to Europe each year.

The Portuguese turned the conquered territories into their *colonies*. *Colonies were territories which had lost their independence and were oppressed by their conquerors.*

- ? 1. What prompted the geographical discoveries? What were the events that speeded up the search for routes to the East? 2. On the map, trace the route of Vasco da Gama's expedition. How many years later than Afanasy Nikitin did Vasco da Gama reach India? 3. What did the Portuguese do to establish their control over Oriental trade?



The Portuguese arrive in Japan. *Painting on a screen (16th century)*

§ 45. American Peoples in the 15th Century. Columbus Discovers America

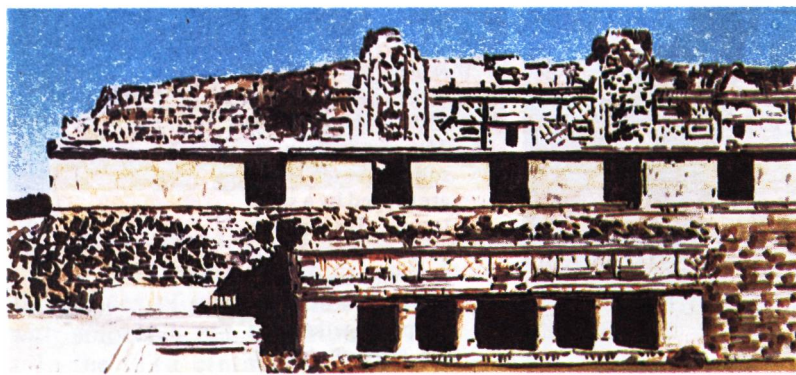
(Map No. 13)

1. *American Peoples in the 15th Century.* Up to the end of the 15th century, the Europeans were aware of the existence of only three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. Although around the year 1000 Scandinavian sailors had discovered *Greenland* and from there reached North America, their discovery remained unknown in the other European countries, and even in Scandinavia itself it was soon forgotten.*

America was inhabited by a multitude of tribes. Most of the population lived from hunting and fishing. In the southern regions of North America and in the elevated areas in Central and South America, the people also cultivated land, growing potatoes, tomatoes, cocoa and tobacco, crops which were unknown in Europe.

The inhabitants of the larger part of the continent had no domestic animals. There were no horses in America. Only in the north people had domesticated dogs, and in the south, llamas.

In the 15th century, the peoples of America had not yet invented the plough or wheeled carts. They had no firearms;



Palace of Maya rulers in Ushmala (8th-9th centuries)

The building is about a hundred metres long and 8.5 metres high. The upper wall is decorated with a huge relief representing the god of fertility, made up of 20,000 stone slabs.

* The voyages of the inhabitants of the Scandinavian Peninsula to America are described in *sagas*—Scandinavian folk tales. Recently, the fact that such voyages had indeed taken place was corroborated by archaeological excavations: remnants of an ancient Scandinavian settlement and items belonging to Scandinavians were found on the North American coast.

their tools and weapons were made of wood, stone or bronze. Most of the indigenous population lived under the primitive communal system. A higher stage of development as compared with the other American peoples was reached by the *Maya*, *Aztec* and *Inca* civilisations.

2. *Maya Culture*. The people called Maya, who inhabited the *Yucatán* Peninsula, had a highly developed culture as far back as in the first centuries A. D. Here, the peasants lived in communities, but a nobility and priests were already distinguished from the others; they oppressed slaves and dependent community members. Directed by the priests, the Maya people



Maya pyramid in Chichén-Itzá (12th-13th centuries)

The foundation is square; the ten ledges are topped by a small temple. The number of the steps in the four staircases leading towards the temple, together with the step on top, is equal to the number of days in a year—365. The total number of ledges on each side, 18, corresponds to the number of months on the Maya calendar.



Maya observatory in Chichén-Itzá (11th-12th centuries)

The walls of the upper storey have four openings through which the priests observed the heavenly bodies. Two are situated in such a way that during the equinoxes (March 21 and September 21) the sun was directly in the line of sight of the astronomers.



built snow-white temples in the midst of the jungle. They were shaped like tiered pyramids and decorated with stone reliefs and statues of gods. The Mayas also built roads, paving them with smoothly cut flag stones.

In the third century, the Maya invented a written language. They painted hieroglyphics on paper with small brushes, and decorated manuscripts with miniatures. Inscriptions were also carved on tall stone pillars and temple walls. The priests used hieroglyphics to write down sermons, myths and accounts of historical events.

In the 16th century, Maya manuscripts were collected and

Articles made by Aztec craftsmen: 1) a flint knife with the handle shaped like a man's figure and decorated with mosaic; 2) a clay vessel with an ornament; 3) copper pendants

Aztec mask

burned by Spanish monks. Only a few texts remained intact, and it took scholars many years to decipher them. At first they managed only to establish the meaning of individual words and phrases. In recent years, Soviet scholars have deciphered the Maya writing and read all the manuscripts.

Maya priests made observations of the sun and planets. They were able to predict solar and moon eclipses, and calculated the time it took the planets to revolve around the sun. They also devised one of the most accurate calendars of ancient peoples. From the Maya, written language and the calendar were passed on to other peoples of Central America.

3. *The Culture of the Aztecs and Incas.* The Aztecs lived in *Mexico*, on a mountain plateau 2,000 metres above sea level. They subjugated neighbouring tribes and forced them to pay tribute in the form of gold and give the Aztecs slaves and warriors. Using the labour of the subjugated tribes, the Aztecs drained swamps, turning them into orchards and vegetable gardens crossed by canals.

Mexico City, the Aztec capital, was situated on an island in the middle of a large lake. The canals that ran across the city in different directions formed straight streets. Along the canals rose temples and houses of the nobility which were decorated with statues, mosaics and carpets. Aztec crafts reached a high level of development.

The country of the Incas, *Peru*, stretched for thousands of kilometres in the steep mountains rising in the western region of South America. The Incas did not work; they only governed the subjugated tribes. The most arduous work was done by slaves. On the steep mountain slopes, they levelled out plots of land for cultivation. To ensure that streams of water did not wash away the earth, they reinforced the edges of the land plots with stones. Canals paved with stone slabs led from mountain rivers to the fields.

Two well-built roads with tunnels and suspended bridges intersected the Inca country. Postal communications were maintained between the country's regions with messages being carried by couriers.

American peoples had reached a high level of cultural development long before the Europeans' arrival on the continent.

4. *Columbus Discovers America.* How did it happen that Europeans reached America while looking for routes to India?

In the 15th century it became known that ancient scholars believed the Earth was round. The first globes were made. Scholars insisted that sailing westwards, one could go round



Articles made by Inca craftsmen: clay vessels; a cotton rug with woven ornament



Page from a Maya manuscript



Taking in the potato-crop

the Earth and reach India. This route was mistakenly believed to be shorter than the route around Africa. The first navigator who tried to reach India following the western route was *Christopher Columbus*. Born in Italy near Genoa into a weaver's family, in his youth he took part in a number of sea voyages and later drew up geographical maps. Examining the notes of sailors and scholarly works, he became firmly convinced that the Earth was indeed round.

Having settled in Spain, Columbus put a lot of effort into organising an expedition across the Atlantic Ocean in search of a sea route to India. The King granted his permission only after eight years. He appointed Columbus the ruler of all countries and islands he might discover. Spanish merchants and shipowners helped Columbus equip the expedition.

In the summer of 1492, three small caravels with a crew of 90 sailed from Spain. Favourable winds made the passage easy and swift. Weeks passed, but there was no land in sight, only the vast and mysterious ocean lay ahead. The sailors grumbled and demanded that the expedition turn back. But Columbus was determined to continue the voyage. At long last, on the 70th day after departure, a watchman on one of the ships shouted that he saw land.

The Spanish ships put in at a small island. From here, Columbus sailed to the south in search of gold, and discovered the islands of *Cuba* and *Haiti*. At the end of the voyage, Columbus returned to Spain on the one remaining ship.

In the years that followed, Columbus made three more voyages west. He discovered many islands in the *Caribbean Sea* and explored part of the coast of the American continent. But he found neither gold nor any other fabulous riches. Disappointed, the Spanish government stripped the courageous nav-



Warehouse manager reports to the Inca ruler. A drawing illustrating a 16th-century chronicle

Stock was taken with the help of knots made at definite intervals on different-coloured strings tied to a stick. The shape of the knots and their number signified numbers, and the colour of the string—the type of goods: potatoes, cocoa, silver, etc.



Christopher Columbus

Map of the world, 16th century. Compare it to the Portuguese map of 1490 (see p. 193).



Columbus disembarks on an island he has discovered. 16th-century engraving

igator of all his titles. His property went to pay the debts which he had incurred when equipping the ships. Abandoned and forgotten by all, he died in dire poverty.

Columbus never realised that he had discovered a new continent. He called the lands he had discovered "India", and their indigenous inhabitants, "Indians", a name that stuck. *Amerigo Vespucci*, an Italian explorer, proved that the land discovered by Columbus was a new continent. An account of Vespucci's voyages to the coast of South America aroused great interest in Europe. The new continent was named after Amerigo—America.

5. *The First Voyage Around the World*. In 1519-1522, the Spaniards undertook another expedition trying to reach Asia by the western route. It was led by *Fernando Magellan*, a courageous and experienced sailor and a man of very strong will.

A flotilla consisting of five ships set out to cross the Atlan-

tic Ocean. Magellan courageously led the ships along the South American coast until they reached a strait leading to the west, which was later called the *Strait of Magellan*. Sailing through this strait, the ships came out into the ocean. The weather remained fair throughout their four months' voyage, and the sailors called the waters the Pacific Ocean. Soon they found themselves in a precarious situation: food supplies ran out, and they were forced to eat stale bread and drink bad water. Many got scurvy and died.

Finally the explorers reached the *Philippines*. There, Magellan was killed in a skirmish with the local population. Out of five ships with a crew of 265 only one ship carrying 18 sick sailors returned home.

The first around-the-world voyage proved beyond any doubt that the Earth was round.

Deciphering Maya Manuscripts

Following orders from the inquisition, the Spanish monks burned all Maya manuscripts in the mid-16th century. Soon, the Maya could no longer remember their written language, and all the priests were dead. Only four manuscripts with colourful illustrations and captions escaped destruction. Scholars from many countries worked for years trying to decipher them, but the symbols remained as mysterious as ever.

Yuri Knorozov, a Soviet scholar, following a study of old Egyptian and Indian writing, and the modern language of the Maya and their life, suggested that the symbols in the manuscripts were hieroglyphics, each of which might designate a letter, a syllable or a whole word. Comparing the drawings and symbols in the manuscripts, he gradually came to decipher words and sentences. Knorozov published a translation of the extant manuscripts and wrote a commentary to them. The manuscripts contain highly valuable information about the economy and the position of the various sections of Maya population.

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1. What were the occupations of the American peoples in the 15th century?
2. Why did Columbus sail westwards searching for a route to India? What did he and his sailors accomplish? On the map, trace the route followed

- by his first expedition.
3. Which discovery of America had more important consequences for history: the first, made around the year 1000, or the second, made in 1492? Substantiate your answer..

§ 46. Europe's Colonial Conquests in America

(Map No. 13)

1. Who Took Part in Conquering the Colonies. Thousands of people in quest of easy gain poured into the countries discovered by the Portuguese and Spaniards. Having driven the Arabs from the Iberian Peninsula, Spanish and Portuguese knights, who considered war the only occupation worthy of them, were left with nothing more to do. Their swords were growing rusty in their scabbards, and their pockets were empty. But they despised honest work and preferred to borrow from rich townsmen. The impoverished noblemen dreamed of becoming wealthy through conquests and the plunder of other countries. It was they who made up the majority of soldiers who embarked on campaigns of conquest.

An active part in equipping the expeditions was played by merchants and shipowners. They grew rich through the trade and plunder of subjugated countries.

Catholic priests and monks followed the conquerors to America and Asia. They called for capturing new territories under the pretext of converting the local population to Christianity. The Catholic Church received a sizeable share of the loot captured in the colonies.

The soldier, merchant and monk were the first to disembark on the newly discovered shore. It was said about the conquerors that they had a cross in their hands and an insatiable thirst for gold in their hearts.

2. The Conquest of Mexico and Peru. The Spanish government soon realised that the lands discovered by Columbus were not



Battle between European conquerors and Indians. 16th-century engraving

the eastern coast of Asia. Still, it continued to send expeditions to America to find gold and enslave the local population.

In 1519, a detachment numbering 400 soldiers disembarked on the Mexican shore. It was led by a nobleman by the name of *Cortez*, who, as one of the participants in the campaign put it, had little money but many debts. The Spaniards were assisted by the tribes subjugated by the Aztecs, who hated their oppressors. Having enlarged his detachment with Indian warriors, Cortez led it to Mexico City. The sight of horses and the booming of cannon filled the Aztecs with panic. The Aztec ruler lost his bearings after the very first series of setbacks and allowed the Spaniards to enter the capital.

Soon Cortez tricked the Aztec ruler into captivity and began to rule the country in his name. The population was to pledge allegiance to the Spanish king and pay the Spaniards tribute in gold. In the ruler's palace, the Spaniards found a secret door behind which they discovered a cache of gold objects and jewels. The conquerors looted the treasures which the Aztecs had been accumulating for centuries. The bulk of the booty went to Cortez and the Spanish king.

Enraged by the cruelty and greed of the conquerors, the Aztecs rebelled. In a night skirmish, Cortez lost many soldiers yet just barely fought his way through the thick crowd of the attackers. Having replenished his detachment with Spaniards, who had arrived from Cuba, and Indian warriors, he surrounded Mexico City. The city had no fresh water supply, and almost the entire population died from starvation and disease. The Spaniards entered the destroyed and deserted capital once more.

Another conqueror, an illiterate but energetic and cruel man named *Francisco Pizarro*, attacked Peru with a 200-strong detachment. The Spanish soldiers captured the Inca ruler and de-

Incas bringing ransom for their ruler.
16th-century engraving

Massacre of the Indians.
16th-century engraving



manded a huge ransom for him: the Incas had to fill a large room with gold. But, having received the ransom, the Spaniards went back on their word and did not give the prisoner his freedom. Instead, they gave him a court hearing and sentenced him to death. The Spaniards looted the ancient temples in the capital of Peru. When splitting the booty, they melted priceless objects of Inca art made of gold and silver.

The Spanish conquerors barbarously destroyed the ancient culture of American peoples.

3. *The Enslavement and Extermination of America's Indigenous Population.* Soon the Spaniards had conquered all of South America. Only *Brazil* in its eastern part was subjugated by the Portuguese, who had chanced upon it during their voyages to India.

The Spaniards took lands away from the Indians and divided them among themselves. Indigenous inhabitants were turned into slaves and serfs. Spurred on by the overseers' whips, they tilled the fields of the Spanish conquerors and tended their cattle. Labour in silver mines and at gold fields was back-breaking: those who were driven there to work were mourned by relatives as if they had died.

The freedom-loving and proud Indians refused to work for the conquerors. Many killed their families and themselves; others fled to the mountains and forests. The Spaniards hunted the fugitives as they did wild animals, sending dogs after them and trampling them with horses.

Priests and monks tried to induce the Indians to renounce the faith of their ancestors. Those who refused to obey were tortured and killed in the presence of their wives and children. In an attempt to justify these atrocities, "the holy fathers" said that Indians were "soulless creatures like animals". The church



Porters. Engraving from *Las Casas'* book

Overburdened and exhausted, the Indians fall down, but the Spanish soldiers mercilessly lash them on.

helped the invaders to enslave the population of the colonies.

The Indians were rapidly dying out from back-breaking labour, hunger and illnesses. By the mid-16th century, the Spaniards had completely exterminated the indigenous population of Cuba and other islands in the Caribbean.

4. *Slave Trade*. As great numbers of Indians died, new black slaves were brought to America from Africa. Following the example of the Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutchmen and Englishmen also went to Africa for more blacks. Slave traders bought blacks from local princes for peanuts or grabbed them by force. At night, they would surround a black village, set it on fire at all ends and capture the people rushing about in a panic. Then the blacks were chained and loaded onto ships. The "live goods" were transported cooped up in the low holds of ships. Many captives suffocated, went mad, or died from thirst and hunger. The dead were thrown overboard; sharks escorted slave ships in the ocean, waiting for food.

In America, the blacks were sold at slave markets. Slave trade brought European merchants and pirates enormous profits.

5. *The Impact of the Explorers' Discoveries*. The geographical discoveries resulted in an unprecedented expansion of trade. Contacts among continents were established; trade became *global*. Europeans who moved to the colonies bought a lot of goods produced by craftsmen, such as weapons, fabrics, and tableware. Goods that Europeans had not known before found their way to Europe: cocoa and tobacco were brought from America, and tea and coffee from Asia.

Up to the 16th century, the major trade routes of the Europeans ran across the Mediterranean. Following the geographical discoveries the trade routes passed across oceans. Venice and Genoa found themselves far away from the new trade routes.



Black slaves working on sugar-cane fields on the estate of a Spanish landowner. Engraving (early 17th century)

Trade with the colonies was concentrated mostly in the ports of the Netherlands, Portugal and England. Antwerp, a big port city in the Netherlands, became the principal centre of world trade. About 200-250 ships were unloaded in its spacious harbours every day. Antwerp was the gateway through which a stream of colonial goods was continuously pouring into Europe. The richest merchants and money-lenders had offices in Antwerp.

Spices, gold and silver began to arrive to Europe in great quantities. The lion's share of these valuables ended up in the hands of the Spanish and Portuguese kings and feudal lords. Economically backward, Spain and Portugal had almost no industry of their own. Thus the gold seeped away from the feudal lords as payment for the luxuries bought from other countries. The wealth looted in the colonies found its way into the pockets of merchants, money-lenders and owners of large workshops in the more developed European countries. Having saved enough money, rich men opened new enterprises and increased the output of commodities.

The geographical discoveries and colonial conquests promoted the growth of production in European countries. But for the peoples of America, Asia and Africa, they signified the beginning of colonial oppression.



A globe

- ?
1. What were the consequences of the inventions and engineering discoveries made in the 15th-16th centuries?
 2. Explain why the Europeans managed to reach India by sea only in the late 15th century and not earlier.
 3. Where did the trade routes to Oriental countries run before the 16th century? On the map, point out the sea routes leading from Europe to America and Asia in the 16th century.
 4. On the map, point out the colonies the European countries possessed in the 16th century. What was the difference between these colonies and the colonies of Ancient Greece?
 5. How were the actions of the Spaniards in America and the Portuguese in Asia similar? How can you explain the differences in their actions?
 6. What did the European conquerors bring to the peoples of the colonies? What were the consequences of the geographical discoveries for the West European countries?

CHAPTER 12

THE BEGINNING OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND IN THE 16th CENTURY

In the 16th century, first in England and then in the other countries of Europe, capitalist enterprises began to appear. Their emergence produced important changes in the life of the European peoples.

§ 47. The Development of Capitalism in Industry

(Map No. 15)

1. *"The Most Valuable Product of the Kingdom"*. Even now, a sack full of sheep's wool lies in front of the king's throne in the House of Lords of English Parliament. On it sits the Lord Chancellor, the chairman of the House of Lords. What is the significance of this?

The fact is that sheep-breeding and the manufacture of woollen fabrics have long been traditional occupations of the English people and a major source of revenue for the treasury. Initially, England only exported raw wool, but in the 16th century, it already exported more woollen fabrics than wool. Englishmen called the fabrics the most valuable product of the Kingdom.

In the 16th century, the demand for woollen fabrics increased. English woollens were popular with noblemen and rich townspeople in many countries. Soon, craftsmen with their small workshops could no longer produce enough fabric; only large enterprises which employed dozens and even hundreds of people could meet the demand.

2. *Large Enterprises Appear*. In southeastern England, peasants had long bred sheep and spun and wove wool in the time they had been free from agricultural work. They sold their crude homespun woollens in the nearest markets. But when the demand for woollen cloth increased, rich merchants began to make rounds of villages, buying large amounts of wool and distributing it among village spinners for processing. Receiving the woollen yarn, they passed it on to weavers, who made fabrics.



Export of woollen fabrics and wool from England *Explain why the export of woollen fabrics grew while the export of wool went down.*

The merchants sold the finished fabrics in town or brought them to ports for export.

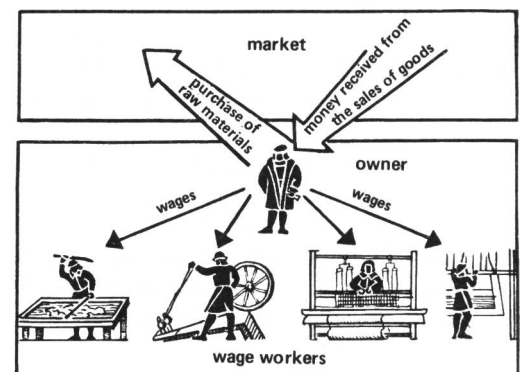
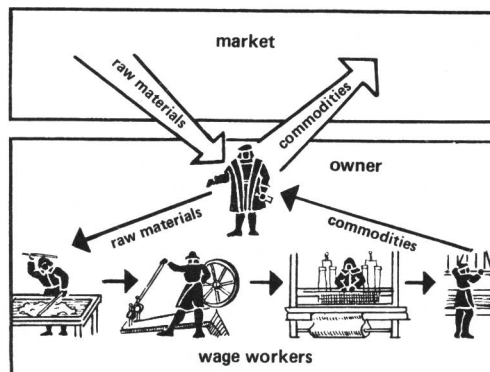
For filling the orders placed by merchants, impoverished peasants who worked at home were paid small sums of money. Many used looms which belonged to the merchants. Often, hundreds of village spinners and weavers worked for one merchant. *Receiving wool for processing, looms and payment for their labour from the merchant, the impoverished peasants were gradually becoming hired workers.*

As long as they worked at home, however, the merchant found it difficult to supervise their labour. To increase his income, he gathered the workers under one roof. Thus *the merchant became the owner of a large industrial enterprise.*

Some wealthy town craftsmen began to expand their workshops. They built large premises, installed looms and hired many apprentices. *The workshop thus became a large enterprise, and the apprentices—hired workers.*

What do you know about the crafts in medieval towns?

Manufactory—a capitalist enterprise
Using the diagrams, explain how the owner of the manufactory received profit from the labour of hired workers.



*Large enterprises of the time had no power-driven machinery; all manufacturing was done by hand. Spinning-wheels and looms were set in motion manually, rather than by an engine. Large enterprises which used manual labour were called *manufactories* (from the Latin *manufactus*, "made by hand").*

3. Division of Labour. With the expansion of commodity production, the division of labour among the craftsmen's workshops progressed further. This provided the basis for the division of labour within the manufactories.

At a manufactory, where large groups of people were employed, work could be distributed among the labourers. Some boiled wool in large tubs, rinsed it in cold water and dried it in the sun, others combed and brushed it. Then the wool was passed on

What facts prove that there was a division of labour between guilds?

to the spinners who stretched it into yarn. The weavers made yarn into cloth, and the dyers dyed it. *There was a division of labour among workers performing different operations at the manufactories, with each group doing only a certain part of the common work.*

The division of labour made it possible to improve methods of work; performing one and the same operation repeatedly, the workers acquired a high level of skill. In one day, the workers employed at a manufactory produced much more woollen fabric than the same number of small-time craftsmen did. *The division of labour at the manufactories helped raise labour productivity.*

4. *The Bourgeoisie and Hired Workers.* In a manufactory, everything was the property of its owner: the premises, the raw materials, the tools and the finished goods. As distinct from the craftsmen, owners of manufactories performed no manual work themselves; they only managed the enterprises. As a rule, they delivered the cloth to merchants, who sold it in their shops and stores or marketed it in other countries. *Owners of manufactories, merchants and all the rich people who acquired their wealth through the labour of hired workers comprised the class of the bourgeoisie.*

Unlike the feudal lords, the bourgeoisie had large sums of money, and owned enterprises and commodities; often, rich townsmen bought land as well. The methods used by the bourgeoisie to exploit the hired workers were different from those employed by the feudal lords who exploited their peasants.

Hired workers toiled from dawn till night. They received only meagre subsistence wages; the owners harassed them with fines for the smallest oversight.

Hired workers did have personal freedom but, as distinct from dependent peasants, they had neither land, nor farmsteads or tools. To earn their daily bread, they had to hire out their labour to the owners of manufactories.

Manufactories were emerging not only in cloth-making but in wine-making, arms production and shipbuilding. Their owners grew rich through the labour of hired workers. Manufactories were the first *capitalist enterprises*—enterprises based on the exploitation of hired workers.

A manufactory was a capitalist enterprise where manual labour implements were used and a division of labour among workers existed. With the emergence of manufactories, new classes—the bourgeoisie and hired workers—originated.

- ? 1. Study Map No. 15 to learn what industries developed in England in the 16th century. 2. Why did large enterprises producing woollen fabrics begin to emerge in England? In what two ways were they formed? Can a printing shop be regarded as a manufactory? Explain. 3. Why did more manufactories appear in the countryside rather than in towns in the 16th century? 4 Why was labour more productive at a manufactory than in a craftsman's workshop? 5. Which enterprises are called capitalist? Give a description of the new classes which appeared with the emergence of manufactories.

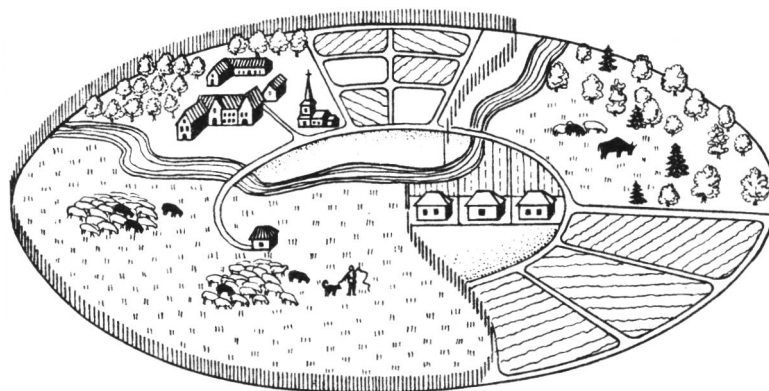
§ 48. Enclosures and Their Consequences

(Map No. 15)

1. Peasants Are Driven Off Their Land. In 16th-century England, some said that sheep were "devouring" people. Through no fault of their own, the inoffensive animals had indeed become enemies to dozens of thousands of peasants.

The expanding production of woollen cloth caused a steady rise in wool prices. It was more profitable to breed sheep than to grow wheat. Sheep's hooves were turning sand into gold, as the then current saying went.

Sheep-breeding required large pastures, so landowners began to seize community grazing grounds and wastelands and forbade the peasants to graze their cattle there. Then they began to appropriate peasant plots. To make farming more difficult for the peasants, noblemen gave orders to dig ditches across the roads leading to watering places, and fined the peasants whose cattle strayed beyond the boundaries. In violation of



Feudal estate after enclosures
Compare this plan with the plan of the feudal estate on p. 27

laws that had evolved over the centuries, the gentry raised land rent. Noblemen also forced peasants to abandon their shabby huts, destroying the dwellings by the dozen, and razed whole villages to the ground. Maps at that time often had notations like "This used to be a village; now it is a pasture".

The people who were driven off their land and ruined had nowhere to turn for protection. The king's courts were always on the side of the landowners, since the judges were also members of the nobility.

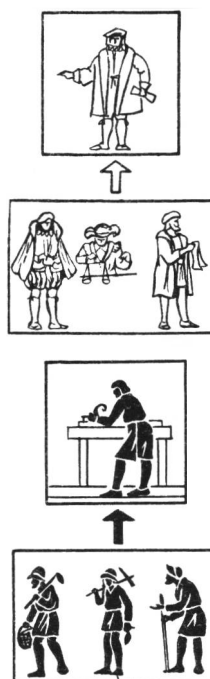
The lands taken away from the peasants were enclosed by fences or ditches. This is why *the forcible removal of the English peasants from their land came to be known as enclosures*.

As a result of enclosures, many free people in England were left with neither land nor labour implements.

2. *The New Gentry*. Having seized peasant lands, the noblemen began to breed large herds of sheep. They had no use for their knight's armour anymore, for they took up accounting in order to increase their profits. Prudent and thrifty, they hired agricultural workers, *farm-hands*, from among the poorest peasants to till their fields and tend their cattle. Landowners who used the new farming methods were called *the new gentry*.

They sold wool, wheat and vegetables in the markets; some of them owned textile mills, tanneries and other enterprises. Their younger sons, not entitled to inheritance, were often apprenticed to merchants. The new gentry did not consider it unworthy of their aristocratic heritage to marry their children off to those of merchants, or to trade with countries overseas. *The new gentry were growing to be more and more like the bourgeoisie*

The old landed gentry – the feudal lords – stuck to old methods of farming. They received payment in kind from their peasants



What sections of the population comprised the class of bourgeoisie and the class of dependent peasants?



House of a feudal lord. Compare the 16th-century feudal lord's palace with the 13th-century knight's dwelling

House of a rich townsman

and seldom sold produce in the markets.

3. *The Laws Against Vagabonds and Beggars.* Tens of thousands of peasants who had been driven off their land left their native parts and became vagabonds or paupers. It was very difficult for the ruined peasants to find jobs. The towns still had few manufactories; on the estates, only one shepherd was required where a dozen peasant families used to work. Without work or shelter, the vagabonds took to begging on the roads. Thousands died from cold, starvation and disease.

The Government passed harsh laws against vagabonds and beggars. The laws stated that a captured vagabond was to be chained to a wheel-barrow and flogged until blood coursed down his body. The vagabond became the slave of the person who reported him to the authorities. With the help of the rod, the master forced his newly acquired slave to do the hardest work. If a vagabond escaped and was caught again, his ears were cut off, he was branded and thrown into prison. Those caught for the third time were hanged as basest criminals. Gallows could be seen on all the main roads and in market squares. In the first half of the 16th century, over 70,000 people were executed in England.

To avoid death from starvation or by hanging, the ruined peasants hired out their labour for any, even the lowest, wages. This served the interests of manufactory owners and the new gentry.

The government used the harsh laws to turn former peasants into docile workers.

4. *Uprisings in Protest Against Enclosures.* More than once, peasants deprived of their lands took up arms to fight against enclosures. They destroyed fences and filled up ditches.

In 1549, a major peasant uprising began in Eastern England, where enclosures were particularly widespread.

The leader of the rebels was *Robert Kett*—a petty landowner who had had enough of mistreatment from his richer neighbours. He led peasant detachments on *Norwich*, the nearest large city, but the rich townspeople closed the city gates. The peasants set up camp in a forest not far from the city. Farmers from nearby villages supplied them with food. Town paupers flocked to join the rebels: soon, up to 20,000 people had gathered in the camp. The rebels defeated the troops sent out against them and took Norwich.

The peasants made up a list of demands addressed to the king. They petitioned him to discontinue enclosures and forbid the big landowners to use community pastures.

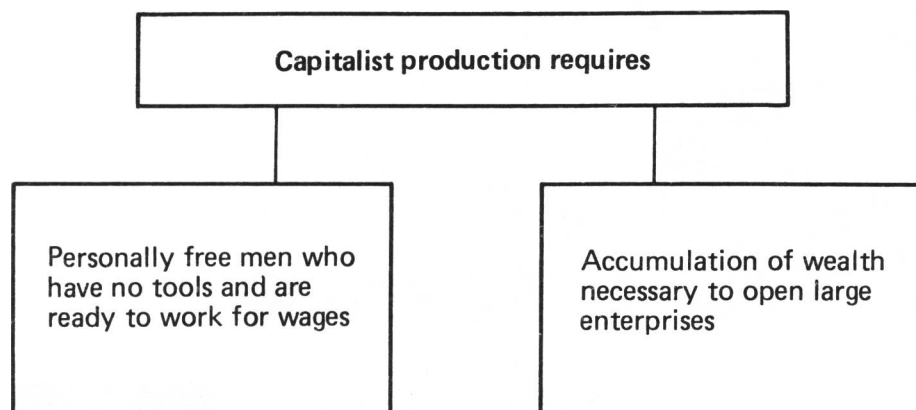


English lords

The government amassed a large force consisting of noblemen and foreign mercenaries. In the decisive battle, the rebels lost over 3,000 soldiers and were defeated. Robert Kett was captured and hanged. Hundreds of participants in the uprising were executed by the noblemen.

Subsequently, the peasants organised new uprisings in protest against enclosures, but all were brutally suppressed. The nobility continued to appropriate peasant lands.

- ? 1. Why did the English gentry begin to drive peasants off their lands in the 16th century? What were the consequences of enclosures? 2. What was the difference between the new and old gentry? What did the new gentry have in common with the bourgeoisie? 3. How did the government force the ruined people to become hired workers? Whose interests were promoted by the harsh legislation? 4. What was the difference between the demands set forth by the peasants in 1549 and in 1381? Why were their demands different?



§ 49. Maritime Trade and Colonisation Beyond the Seas

1. *Maritime Trade.* After the geographical discoveries, England found itself at the intersection of new trade routes. London grew into a large port with wharfs, docks and warehouses. Its population reached 200,000. Many merchants set up offices in central London.

With the emergence of manufactories, England began to export more goods to other countries. The English shipping

What were the consequences of the geographical discoveries?

business was booming. Merchants shipped woollen fabrics, coal and fish to European countries and colonies.

To overcome the risks and dangers associated with overseas trade, the merchants taking part in it established *companies*. They bought the goods together, and split the profits depending on the amount of money contributed by each. The *East India Company* was the richest. It alone had the right, granted by the government, to trade with the countries situated on the coast of the Indian and Pacific oceans. Trade with the Russian state was conducted by the *Moscow Company*. Its ships sailed around the Scandinavian Peninsula and into the White Sea. The *Guinea Company* dealt in the ignominious business of importing slaves from Africa.

English kings welcomed the establishment of companies, as the merchants paid large sums of money into the treasury.



What countries did Spain colonise in America and in Asia?



Headquarters of the East India Company. 17th-century engraving

Shipyard of the East India Company. 17th-century engraving

2. *England Begins a Struggle with Spain.* England's chief rival in maritime trade was Spain which had more colonies than any other country. The Spanish government forbade foreign merchants to conduct trade with its colonies. The English ignored the prohibition. English pirates made raids on the Spanish coast and undertook daring expeditions to America. More than once, Spanish ships carrying gold from America to Europe fell pray to pirates. In England, merchant companies were established which organised pirate expeditions against the Spanish.

Queen *Elizabeth I* (1558-1603) encouraged the development of trade and navigation. A cunning and imperious ruler, she relied on clever advisers. The queen staunchly defended the interests of England in its struggle with Spain. During her reign, a large navy was built. Elizabeth secretly supported



Queen Elizabeth I. Portrait by an English artist (16th century)



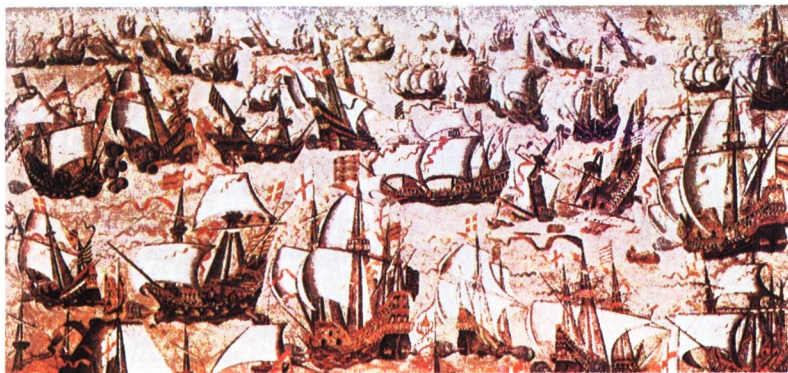
Drake's fleet besieges Santiago, a Spanish fortress in Chile. Engraving

the pirates, who gave part of their booty over to her, and made the more successful of them admirals in the Royal Navy.

Leading a small flotilla, the English pirate *Francis Drake* passed through the Strait of Magellan and plundered the Spanish colonies on the western coast of South America, where gold for shipment to Spain was stored in ports. Then Drake crossed the Pacific and Indian oceans and returned to England, bringing enormous booty. The Spanish ambassador's demands that Elizabeth I compensate for the losses sustained by Spain went unheeded. The queen personally visited Drake's ship and conferred knighthood on the pirate.

3. *The Destruction of the Spanish Armada.* Spain was preparing to invade England. A fleet consisting of 130 sailing ships moved towards the English coast. The ships carried over 20,000 soldiers, who were to embark at the mouth of the Thames. Confidently expecting to win, the Spaniards called their fleet the *Invincible Spanish Armada*.

In 1588, English ships attacked the Spanish fleet in the



The battle of the English fleet with the Spanish Armada. 16th-century engraving

English Channel. The battles on the sea lasted two weeks. Heavy and unwieldy, the Spanish ships had fewer cannons than the English fleet, and were used mostly for carrying troops. The light and fast English vessels with well-trained crews put enemy ships out of action with accurate cannon volleys, set them on fire and sank them. After losing many vessels, the Spanish fleet was forced back into the North Sea and tried to make its way home around England (see Map. No. 15). But a heavy storm scattered the Spanish Armada. Some ships sank, others crushed against the rocks near the shore. Only a pitiful number of Spanish ships managed to reach home.

The inglorious destruction of the Spanish Armada undermined the naval might of Spain. Supremacy in this field was passing to England, which gradually turned into a strong naval power.

4. *The First English Colonies.* The destruction of the Spanish Armada made it easier for England to seize colonies.

In the early 17th century, the English founded *Virginia*, their first colony on the eastern coast of North America. The indigenous Indians were friendly towards the settlers, gave them part of their territory and, in the first difficult years, supplied them with food. Then the colonists began to use force and cunning to get more land, and drove the Indians into the woods. The English soldiers burned down Indian villages, destroyed their crops and exterminated whole tribes.

In Asia, English merchants began to oust the Portuguese. The East India Company used gifts and bribery to secure the permission of the Moguls to conduct duty-free trade with India, from where it exported fabrics, spices and other goods. To consolidate their position in that country, the English turned their trade settlements into fortresses.

Merciless exploitation of the working people of their country, piracy, slave trade and plunder of the colonies allowed the English bourgeoisie to amass enormous wealth.

What is a colony?

How did Spanish and Portuguese conquerors exploit the population of their colonies?

?

1. Why was English maritime trade developing rapidly in the 16th century? What was the purpose of the companies established by merchants?
2. What were the causes of the struggle between England and Spain? Was the victory of the

English in this struggle unexpected? 3. Where were the first English colonies founded? How were the actions of the English and Spanish colonisers similar? 4. How did the English bourgeoisie amass its wealth?

CHAPTER 13

THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE. THE PEASANT WAR IN GERMANY

Beginning in the 16th century, class struggle in Europe gained momentum. The struggle was particularly acute in Germany, where the people made an attempt to destroy the feudal system.

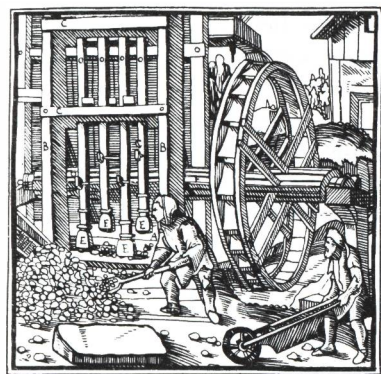
The movement for restructuring (reforming) the church, the mainstay of the feudal system in Germany, was called the Reformation. The Peasant War in Germany was the highest stage of the Reformation.

§ 50. Germany on the Eve of the Reformation and the Peasant War

(Map No. 16)

1. The Development of Industry and Trade. In the early 16th century, the economy of Germany was developing rapidly. Textile, paper and glass industries were booming in the large cities on the Rhine and in the upper reaches of the Danube, and the production of iron, silver and copper was growing. Ore was mined at depths of up to 300 metres. The ventilation and draining of the mines were very expensive.

Previously, miners used to unite into associations to mine ore and smelt metal. Now, the mines were taken over by rich people who bought expensive equipment and exploited



The crushing of ore
with an iron hammer.
16th-century engraving

Merchant Gisze in
his office. *From the
painting by Hans Hol-
bein the younger
(16th century)*

hired workers recruited from among the impoverished miners and ruined peasants. In mining, the textile industry and book-printing, capitalist production was making headway.

The development of manufactories in the towns was obstructed by guilds. For this reason, wealthy merchants frequently established textile manufactories in the countryside, where they used the labour of impoverished peasants. This was how merchants in the cities of *Augsburg* and *Nuremberg* in southern Germany amassed their wealth.

The richest family in Germany was the *Fugger* family. The founder of their prosperous business, a weaver, first owned a workshop; subsequently, he forced many weavers in the Augsburg area to work for him. Having accumulated a large sum of money, the Fuggers went into commerce and banking. The Pope, the German emperor, and many kings and princes were among their debtors. To clear a debt, the emperor granted the Fuggers the right to own silver and copper mines. The Fuggers and other rich people helped equip expeditions to America and traded with the colonies, which brought them exorbitant profits.

2. Feudal Oppression Increases. With the growth of cities, agriculture became more profitable. Not only wheat and meat but wool and flax fetched good prices at town markets. To be able to afford a life of idleness and luxury, feudal lords did their best to increase production on their estates. They expanded their fields at the expense of peasants' plots, seized community lands and forbade the peasants to collect brushwood in the forests, to fish in the ponds and graze cattle in pastures. They made the serfs do more corvée, raised rent in kind, and increased other obligations.

Apart from their feudal obligations, the peasants had to pay taxes to the prince and the church tithe. Often, when a peasant was unable to make the numerous payments, he had to turn to a money-lender, borrowing money at high interest. If he could not pay it back on time, he lost his property. The town rich cruelly oppressed the peasants.

The serfs had no right to go to towns and become hired workers. Overburdened with obligations and taxes, they were unable to improve their farms or buy manufactured goods.

Serfdom slowed down the development of capitalism. The feudal system had to be abolished for capitalism to become established.

Peasants in many regions of Germany reacted to increased oppression by refusing to fulfil feudal obligations. They se-

Why were manufactories, especially clothmaking ones, frequently established in the countryside?

How did the bourgeoisie amass its wealth?

How did the growth of cities affect the condition of dependent peasants?

How did serfdom affect the development of capitalist production?



Peasants giving an oath. 16th-century engraving

cretly acquired weapons and rebelled. The mascot of the rebels was a peasant shoe which they embroidered on their banners (it was a sign of distinction from the nobility, who wore high boots). Disturbances among the town poor also became more frequent.

3. *The Fragmentation of Germany.* Unlike England or France, Germany was not a united state. It had no national laws, treasury or army.

Territories belonging to big feudal lords—princes—and cities were totally independent. The princes maintained mercenary armies; wars among them never stopped. They minted their own coins, administered justice and collected taxes from the population.

Many of the knights' estates were close to being independent little states. Some were so small that it was jokingly said: "When the owner goes to bed, his head lies in his land, while his legs stretch into his neighbour's property." The profits from such estates with few peasants were meagre. Wishing to replenish their scant incomes, some knights became highwaymen, robbing merchants and peasants who passed through their land.

Feudal fragmentation of the country impeded the development of capitalist relations in the economy and trade.

4. *The Catholic Church in Germany.* The Catholic Church mercilessly oppressed the people. Sixteenth-century maps of Germany show that a large part of the country's territory belonged to the church. The Rhine was called "the priests' road": the richest church lands with dozens of cities and hundreds of villages lay along the picturesque and fertile banks of this navigable river. Archbishops and many bishops were independent princes; they brutally oppressed the people

How did dependent peasants struggle against feudal oppression?

Why did Germany remain fragmented?

What authority did big feudal lords have on their estates?

Why was the knights' military service losing its former significance?

What sources of increasing their income did the knights look for in other countries?

living on their lands. Among the seven most powerful princes who elected the emperor were three archbishops.

In those countries where absolute monarchy had been established the kings limited the amount of money sent by the clergy to Rome. In fragmented Germany, however, the Catholic Church was free to rob the people without any opposition from the emperor. The Pope received most of his income from Germany.

In the 16th century, the popes lived in luxurious palaces, were waited upon by numerous servants and spent their time in idle amusement. To increase their profits, the popes sold the positions of bishops and abbots. The avarice of the popes and their idle life provoked a great deal of criticism.

In the early 16th century, dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church spread among the German population.

What consequences for the country did continued feudal fragmentation have?

Why were different sections of the population dissatisfied with the Catholic Church?

Why was the Pope able to get a huge income from Germany?

- ? 1. How did the German bourgeoisie amass its wealth? What similar sources of profit did the German, the English and the French bourgeoisie have? 2. Which groups of the population were discontented with the fragmentation of Germany? Why? 3. How did the position of the German and the English peasants in the 16th century differ? 4. Why did the Catholic Church in Germany provoke universal discontent? Compare the situation with that in Bohemia in the early 15th century.

§ 51. The Beginning of the Reformation in Germany

(Map No. 16)

1. "*A Lightning Strikes Home.*" Against a background of universal discontent, only a spark was needed to trigger an open conflict. The role of such a spark was played by the lively trade in indulgences. In market squares one could often hear a monk's loud voice: "Cough up the money! Save your relatives and friends! The moment a coin hits the bottom of my collecting-box, a sinner's soul gets to heaven."

In 1517, the despicable sale of indulgences was condemned by *Martin Luther*, a learned monk who was also a university professor in *Wittenberg*. He nailed 95 *theses*—his address to believers—to the doors of the university church. Luther condemned the sale of indulgences and challenged everyone



Martin Luther. Portrait by Lucas Cranach (16th century)

disagreeing with him to a dispute. Luther's actions attracted attention throughout the country. Engels said: "Luther's lightning struck home."

Luther championed the interests of the rich townspeople who wanted a "cheap church". Soon he declared that the church could function without the Pope and stated that he agreed with many of John Huss's ideas. Luther suggested that no more money be sent to Rome and called for a determined struggle against the Pope.

When the news of Luther's activities reached Rome, the Pope charged the "impertinent Wittenberg monk" with heresy and issued an edict which consigned Luther to perdition. It was, however, impossible to publish the edict anywhere, for the Pope's emissaries were greeted with mockery and threats. Popular support gave Luther more courage; he declared the Pope himself a heretic and burned the Pope's edict in the presence of university students. In so doing, he made a complete break with the Catholic Church.



The Pope and Catholic theologians. Cartoon (16th century)



Luther burns the Pope's edict on his excommunication. 16th-century engraving

The emperor summoned Luther to an assembly of princes, knights, and representatives of cities. When Luther appeared before the assembly, it was demanded that he renounce his views. But Luther took a firm stand and announced that these were his convictions which he could not change. The emperor tried to arrest Luther, but 300 knights rose to his defence, and one of the princes hid him in his castle.

Luther's activities triggered off the Reformation—a movement to restructure (reform) the Church. The majority of the townspeople, peasants and knights, and some of the princes took part in the Reformation.

2. *What the Participants in the Reformation Sought.* The rich townspeople found the Catholic Church with its elaborate services and numerous saints' days too expensive. They wanted church requisitions for the upkeep of the clergy to be reduced and sought to get a share of its wealth for themselves. The rich townspeople despised the lazy monks and thought that the monasteries ought to be closed down. They wanted a "cheap church". The struggle against the Catholic Church revealed the dissatisfaction of the nascent bourgeoisie with the feudal order.

Many feudal lords also advocated church reform. Using the people's discontent, they sought to seize church lands and wealth. The princes wanted the clergy in their principalities to be subordinate to them and not the Pope. Using the church, they intended to drive the people even harder and to consolidate their own power. The knights dreamed about getting hold of church lands.

The peasants and the town poor not only rose to the struggle against the Catholic Church but sought to get rid of all exploiters. It was a *popular Reformation* spearheaded against the foundations of the feudal system.

The movement for reform spread throughout the country. Monks fled from monasteries; and knights seized church property. But soon the rich townspeople grew frightened by the growing popular movement. Luther, who championed their interests, urged the people to submit to any, even the cruellest, authority.

3. *Thomas Münzer Leads the People's Struggle.* The leader of the popular movement was *Thomas Münzer* (1493-1525). As a young man, he was very fond of learning. By the standards of his time, he was a well-educated man. To be able to openly address the people, he became a clergyman. He spent all his life among the working people and knew their misfortunes and



Erasmus of Rotterdam. By Hans Holbein the younger (16th century)

Why did the Catholic Church protect the feudal system?



Thomas Münzer. (Early 17th-century engraving)



A leaflet by Müntzer

hopes very well.

Müntzer began his struggle against the Catholic Church even earlier than Luther. He held up to shame the clergymen who thought only about filling their pockets with money. When the Reformation began, Müntzer supported Luther. But soon he began to speak up against him, calling him a slow-mover and a cheat who was afraid of the people's revolutionary struggle. Müntzer said that if Luther's supporters did not wish to go further than their attacks against the priests and monks, they should not have started at all.

Müntzer was burning with hatred for knights, princes and rich townsmen—all the oppressors of the common people. He spoke before crowds of peasants and the town poor urging them to destroy the feudal system and begin an armed struggle in order to establish a regime which would abolish the distinction between the rich and the poor. Müntzer repeatedly stressed that all power had to be given to the working people. He declared that he would continue the cause of the Taborites.

Müntzer's bold speeches stirred resentment and hatred among the princes and the clergy. As to the common people, they were very fond of the fiery advocate of their interests and helped him. Once, when some princes tried to arrest Müntzer, miners took up picks and shovels and prevented the arrest.

Persecution made Müntzer move frequently from one region to another. Everywhere, he set up secret societies and distributed letters in which he explained his views. He also sent his supporters to different parts of the country to urge the people to fight the feudal lords.

What did the Taborites fight for?

?

1. What were the aims of the common people, the rich townspeople and the feudal lords in their campaign for church reform? 2. What brought about the Reformation in Germany? How many years had passed between the death of John Huss and Luther's campaign? 3. What was Luther's attitude to the struggle against the

Pope and to the struggle against the feudal lords? How can you explain the difference? 4. Compare the opinions and activities of Luther and Münzer on the following questions: Whose interests did each of them represent? What were the goals they set before the people? What means of struggle did they suggest?

§ 52. The Peasant War in Germany

(Map No. 16b)

1. The Uprising Begins. Early in the year 1525, a peasant war began in Germany. Six detachments numbering up to 40,000 peasants were fighting in the southwestern region of the country. In other areas, the peasants were joined by the townspeople and miners. The town poor everywhere supported the peasants and joined their ranks.

Many monasteries and castles were set ablaze. The peasants burned documents which listed their duties, divided their masters' cattle among themselves and returned community lands seized by the lords. They closed down monasteries and chased away the Catholic priests and monks. Feudal lords fled to towns in panic as soon as peasant detachments approached.

Münzer had contacts with many of the detachments; he personally visited several areas of the uprising, and gave advice to leaders of detachments on military matters.



Peasants. Engraving from a drawing by Albrecht Dürer (16th century)



Peasants assault a knight. 16th-century engraving

2. *The Objectives of the Insurgents.* At the start of the uprising, Münzer and his supporters addressed a letter to the peasants in which they explained how to act in the struggle against the enemy. They urged the people to form an alliance and fight until they achieved complete liberation from feudal oppression, to destroy castles and monasteries and make short shrift of the feudal lords who put up a resistance. This was the most radical *programme* of the rebels.

Not all peasants acted in the way outlined by Münzer. Many were afraid of the feudal lords and wanted to make a deal with them.

In March 1525, leaders of peasant detachments held a meeting. They worked out a programme which came to be known as *Twelve Articles*, as the demands of the peasants were set forth in twelve items. The peasants demanded that personal bondage be abolished, that community lands be returned to them, that corvée, rent in kind and the tithe be reduced, and that each village be allowed to select its own priest.

Twelve Articles were printed as a pamphlet and distributed among peasants. This was a moderate programme: the peasants demanded only that the church and feudal lords be less oppressive, but did not seek to completely abolish the feudal system or a division of all estate lands among the peasants.

In the town of *Heilbronn*, a programme was drawn up in which the wealthy townspeople demanded that the emperor's authority be made stronger, that one currency be introduced throughout Germany and that duties be abolished. All this was to promote the development of trade. But the rich townspeople had no concern for the condition of the peasants; they suggested that the peasants buy their freedom from duties.

3. *The Struggle Is Gaining Momentum.* The uprising was spreading throughout Germany. The most resolute action was taken by the rebels in *Thuringia* in Central Germany, where the peasants were joined by the town poor and miners. The uprising in Thuringia was led by Thomas Münzer.

From the very start of the struggle, Münzer stayed in *Mühlhausen*. The common people there abolished the town council dominated by the rich and set up a new one comprised of Münzer's supporters. In preparing to fight the feudal nobility, the rebels learned the art of warfare and remelted church bells to make cannons. Thousands of peasants came to Mühlhausen to listen to Münzer's impassioned speeches in which he urged the rebels to join forces.



Standard-bearer and drummer of the insurgent peasant army. 16th-century engraving



Insurgent peasants. Title page of the pamphlet "*Twelve Articles*"

But the peasant detachments did not form a single large army; nor was there any overall leadership. In each region, the peasants acted in isolation; for this reason, their detachments could not assist one another when the nobility went on the offensive.

4. *The Peasants Are Defeated.* The rich townspeople were frightened by the scope of the peasant war. Together with their leader Luther, they took the side of the feudal nobility. In mortal fear of the insurgents, Luther urged the princes to suppress and annihilate the peasants. The rich townsmen helped the nobility in suppressing the uprising.

In southwest Germany, the nobility hastily assembled a force which attacked the rebels. The peasant army was several times larger, but it was not very skilled in the art of war and lacked discipline. The composition of the peasant detachments changed all the time as some people joined the army and others left for home. Besides, the peasants were too trusting; they agreed to begin talks with the enemy.

The nobles promised to meet all demands if the peasants disbanded and went home. Part of the rebels believed them and laid down arms. Then noblemen's troops treacherously attacked the insurgent army and smashed the peasant detachments one by one.

In Thuringia, the princes used their mercenary troops against the peasants. Münzer, with an eight-thousand strong force, positioned his troops on a mountain not far from *Frankenhausen*. The peasants surrounded their camp with carts and dug a moat. But Münzer's soldiers were not very well armed. The princes demanded that the rebels give up Münzer and his supporters in exchange for clemency; the insurgents replied that they would stay together—dead or alive.

The princes' mercenaries violated the truce then in effect, and launched an attack. Cannon fire caused heavy casualties in the peasant army. The princes' soldiers stormed the camp and killed about 5,000 people. Münzer received a severe wound in the head and was taken prisoner. He courageously endured torture and was subsequently beheaded on the princes' order. Thus died the outstanding leader of the Peasant War.

In some places, the fighting continued for a long time. Having routed the peasants, the feudal lords unleashed a campaign of terror. Everywhere, gallows were built; the prisoners were tortured, hanged or burned alive. Over 100,000

How did the peasants act during uprisings in England and in France in the 14th century?

insurgents lost their lives.

5. *The Consequences of the Peasant War.* To ensure the successful development of capitalist production in Germany, it was necessary to abolish feudal exploitation and unite the country. These goals could have been attained in the course of the Reformation and the Peasant War if the insurgents had been headed by the bourgeoisie. But the nascent German bourgeoisie proved incapable of leadership.

The Peasant War was the first attempt in Europe to overthrow the feudal system through revolution.

After the Peasant War failure, the feudal lords stepped up exploitation of the peasants. Serfdom spread to the east of the Elbe, where many peasants previously had personal freedom.

The attempt to unite the country and create a centralised state was also unsuccessful. The princes won even greater independence, while towns and the knights found themselves subjugated by them.

The failure of the Peasant War consolidated the fragmentation of Germany for several centuries and resulted in increased feudal exploitation.

- ? 1. What do you see in common between the Peasant War in Germany and the Hussite wars in Bohemia? How did they differ? 2. Compare the programmes of the rebels. Explain why Münzer's programme was more far-reaching than the Twelve Articles. What demands were advanced by the rich townspeople? What was their objective? 3. How did Münzer differ from the leaders of the peasant uprisings in the 14th century in England and France? 4. Explain the reasons for the rebels' defeat. What were the consequences of their failure?



Seal of the insurgent peasants



Reprisals against the insurgent peasants. 16th-century engraving

§ 53. The Spread of the Reformation in Europe. The Struggle of the Catholic Church Against the Reformation

(Map No. 18)

1. *The Advances of the Reformation.* A contemporary stated that the news of Luther's campaign against the sale of indulgences had spread throughout the Christian world in four weeks. Following Germany, the Reformation began in other European countries as well. The Catholic Church was losing its influence. Everywhere, people were ridiculing the ignorance of the Catholic clergymen; cartoons appeared making fun of the Pope and the priests.

The advocates of the Reformation were called *Protestants*, and the new church—the *Protestant Church*.

In their estates in Northern Germany, the princes introduced reforms of the church based on Luther's suggestions. They closed down monasteries and seized the lands of the clergy. The prince was now head of the church in his principality. This branch of the Protestant Church came to be known as the *Lutheran Church*.

Luther's Reformation helped promote the interests of rich townspeople as well. The church became "cheaper": magnificent rituals, the veneration of icons, and many of the numerous church festivals were abolished. The priests urged the believers to obey the princes.

In England, Denmark and Sweden, the Reformation was carried out by the kings with the assistance of the nobility. In these countries, noblemen received a large part of the lands taken away from the church.

In Switzerland and the Netherlands, the Reformation was undertaken by the influential big bourgeoisie. This section of the population was not satisfied with Luther's Reformation in Northern Germany, carried out mostly in the interests of the princes.

2. *The Calvinist Church.* In Geneva, Switzerland, the Protestant Church was headed by *John Calvin*, a Frenchman who had fled his country trying to escape persecution. The church he had founded was called the *Calvinist Church*.

Calvin tried to convince his followers that it was their duty to work hard and conscientiously in order to amass wealth; those who had managed to become rich were allegedly

How far did the Pope's authority extend in the 11th-13th centuries?



The Pope as an ass. Cartoon (16th century). The inscription beneath the drawing said that the Pope could no better interpret the Bible than an ass play the flute or read music.

“chosen by God” and ensured a place in heaven; on the other hand, if someone suffered losses and business failures, it meant that God had doomed this man to the torments of hell. In this way Calvin justified the accumulation of wealth, considering it a thing of which God approved, and tried to persuade the poor folk to reconcile to their hard lot. He spoke out in defence of money-lending and slavery in the colonies.

So that entertainment would not distract the people from work, the Calvinists did not allow dancing or games, nor the wearing of smart clothes. The people guilty of breaking these rules were severely punished. In Geneva, the people’s behaviour was strictly controlled: everyone had to go to church and be in bed early in order to be able to resume work at dawn.

The Calvinist Church consisted of isolated independent communities headed by elected leaders, usually wealthy townspeople. The Calvinists were just as cruel to their enemies as the Catholics, persecuting and burning them. It was with good reason that in the mid-16th century Geneva was nicknamed the Protestant Rome, and Calvin—the Genevan Pope.

The Calvinist faith was adopted by the most resolute members of the bourgeoisie in the European countries.

3. *The Jesuit Order.* In 1540, the Society of Jesus, or the *Jesuit Order*, was established to combat the Reformation. Its founder was *Ignatius of Loyola*, a Spanish nobleman. The Pope declared that the goal of the Jesuits was to return the “misguided masses” to the church.

The Jesuit Order was organised along military lines with strict discipline. The Order was headed by a General, who was subordinated to the Pope alone. The junior members of the Order had to unquestioningly obey the commands of senior members without question. The rules of the Order stated that if the church decided that some thing which looked white was black, the members had to immediately acknowledge that it was black. Jesuits were spies and obedient servants of the Pope. They took careful note of the believers’ confessions, and then sent all valuable information to the head of the Order in Rome.

Unlike other monks, the Jesuits had no monasteries. They dressed in plain clothes and behaved in such a way as not to show that they belonged to the Society of Jesus. The brash, glib and smiling Jesuits, with ears cocked up for



Jesuits. Cartoon
(17th century)

all the news, knew how to worm themselves into the smallest crack.

Using flattery and deceit, Jesuits tried to win the confidence of kings, ministers, nobles and wealthy people in order to influence them. If a ruler opposed the Pope, they did not hesitate to make use of the dagger, poison or the services of hired killers. The members of the Order believed that any crime, even murder, was justifiable if committed for the sake of the church.

Swindling and profiteering made the Jesuit Order immensely rich. The Jesuits owned land, enterprises, ships and even colonies in South America.

4. The Struggle of the Popes Against the Reformation. A large number of the feudal nobility continued to regard the Catholic Church as a staunch supporter in their struggle against popular movements. The Pope secured the assistance of the German emperor, the knights of Spain and Poland, and South German princes. With their help, the Catholic Church began a campaign against the Reformation.

In many countries, the Inquisition persecuted, tortured and executed anyone suspected of abandoning the Catholic faith with even greater brutality than before.

To prevent the believers from reading books hostile to the church, the Pope published a list of books banned for Catholics. Later, this list was constantly added to, and came to include literary works and scholarly books which aroused the fear of the church. Books were burned on town squares all over Europe.

In its fight against the Reformation, the Catholic Church used all the means at its disposal, including the extermination of its opponents. In France, where the Reformation was

How did the Catholic Church fight against the heretics?



Luther, the Pope and Calvin. Cartoon (16th century)



The burning of heretics at the stake in Spain. From the painting by Pedro Berruguete (Spain, 16th century)

supported by many noblemen and townspeople, the Catholics organised a massacre of Protestants. Protestant leaders were lured to the wedding of the king's sister in Paris. The Catholics had armed themselves in advance and marked the houses where Protestants lived with white crosses. One August night in 1572 (on the eve of Saint Bartholomew's Day), a bell began to toll in the belfry of one of Paris churches. That was the signal to start the massacre. Protestants were murdered in their beds, thrown out of the windows of their houses; neither women nor children were spared.

A wave of mass murders swept through other French towns and cities. In two weeks, over 30,000 people were killed. This slaughter of Protestants became known as *Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre*. The Pope not only approved of the



murders but also gave an order to have them commemorated by a medal.

The Catholic Church managed to suppress the Reformation in Poland, Italy, and Southern Germany. In the countries where the Catholic Church proved more powerful, the feudal order usually lingered on much longer than in the countries where the Reformation was put into effect.

Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre. From the painting by François Dubois (France, 16th century)

- ?
1. Explain why the church reform carried out by Luther was in the interests of both the princes and the rich townspeople? What aspects of Calvin's teaching attracted the most resolute section of the bourgeoisie?
 2. What did the Catholic Church do to combat the Reformation? How did the Jesuits consolidate the Pope's authority?
 3. What did the Catholic Church and the Jesuits manage to achieve in their struggle against the Reformation?

CHAPTER 14

THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION IN THE NETHERLANDS

By the late Middle Ages, the class struggle reached the highest peak in the Netherlands. In that country, a revolution took place—one social system was replaced by another.

§ 54. The Netherlands under Spanish Rule. The Revolution Begins

(Map No. 17)

1. *The Development of Capitalist Relations.* In the lower reaches of the navigable rivers *Schelde*, *Maas* and *Rhine* lay a country known as the Netherlands (which means “lower lands”). In the mid-16th century, this country was the most densely populated European state. Its population was 3 million, and it had about 300 cities and towns and 6,500 villages. The hard-working people living in the Netherlands spent centuries trying to win the coastal lands away from the sea, drained them and protected them with dams.

The geographical position of the Netherlands was very advantageous: Dutch merchants could use rivers to conduct trade with France and Germany, and the sea for trade with England and the Scandinavian countries. In the province of Flanders, rich cities where crafts were highly developed appeared very early. Weavers made fine fabrics from English wool. After the geographical discoveries, trade became even more brisk. Antwerp, a sea port, became the centre of world trade.

The Netherlands emerged as one of the more advanced and wealthy European countries. In towns and the countryside, manufactories were emerging which produced cloth, carpets, canvas and naval equipment. Large workshops cast cannons, and swift ships were built at shipyards. Small-scale production in craftsmen’s workshops was being ousted by the manufactories and was on the decline. *As in England, capitalist production in the Netherlands was developing rapidly.*

Hired labour was widely used not only at the manufactories but in the fishing industry, navigation and agriculture. The bourgeoisie bought up the lands of impoverished noblemen



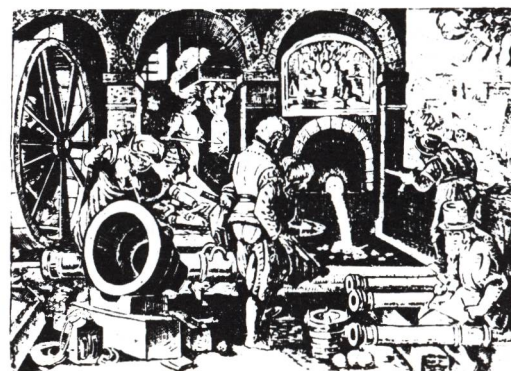
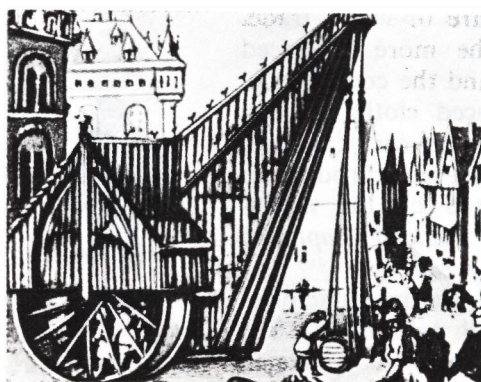
Dutch merchant



Village in the Netherlands. *Miniature from a calendar (late 15th century)*

A crane in the Brugge market. *15th-century miniature*
The crane was set in motion by a wheel rotated by people inside.

A workshop producing cannons. *Can this enterprise be considered a manufactory?*



and peasants. Using the labour of hired workers, it received large profits from the production of food and raw materials needed to supply the cities.

In the far north of the Netherlands, large areas of land belonged to free peasants. In other regions, and especially in the south, the feudal nobility was still powerful: it owned most of the land there. The peasants who had bought their personal freedom still depended on the feudal lords for their land.

2. *The Netherlands under Spanish Rule.* In the mid-16th century, the Netherlands were under the domination of Spain, a backward feudal state. At that time, apart from the Netherlands, Spain had colonies in America and southern Italy; at one time, its king was the Holy Roman Emperor. It was said that the sun never sets on his empire.

The Spanish king had unlimited power. His mercenary army and navy were the strongest in Europe. The Netherlands, which consisted of 17 provinces, was the most valuable possession of Spain, bringing four times as much income to the treasury as the overseas colonies. The Spanish king collected exorbitant taxes from the population of the Netherlands. This deprived the bourgeoisie in that country of a large part of its income. Many owners of manufactories were forced to close down their enterprises. Thousands of workers found themselves out of jobs, with the threat of famine and poverty hanging over them.

The oppression by the Spanish feudal lords undermined the development of capitalist production in the Netherlands and prevented the bourgeoisie from amassing wealth. But it was the common people that suffered most.

3. *The Discontent Grows Stronger.* The population of the Netherlands hated the Spaniards, and especially the Catholic Church, the mainstay of the Spanish king's power. Calvinism was spreading among the bourgeoisie and the common people. Even among the nobility there were many who resented the fact that the Spanish king had pushed them aside from managing state affairs and had violated age-old rights.

The situation in the Netherlands became unbearable when Philip II (1556-1598), a fervent Catholic, succeeded to the Spanish throne. He was a stubborn, stupid and cruel despot. He dreamed of subjugating all Europe with the help of the army and the Inquisition.

Philip II introduced the Inquisition in the Netherlands and mercilessly persecuted the heretics. His spies were everywhere,

Why did the manufactories replace small-scale production in workshops?

on the lookout for Protestants. Church courts sentenced hundreds of people to brutal torture and then burning at the stake. On pain of death, the population of the Netherlands was forbidden to give shelter to or help the heretics.

Oppression by Spanish feudal lords and the Inquisition aroused indignation in the country. Fewer and fewer people attended Catholic churches. After dark, crowds assembled to listen to Calvinist preachers. In a number of towns, armed clashes between the people and the Spanish soldiers took place. The poor stoned the guards and snatched heretics sentenced to death from the clutches of inquisitors. *A popular uprising against the Spanish feudal lords and the Catholic Church was maturing in the Netherlands.*

4. *The Beginning of the Revolution.* In 1566, there was a popular uprising. Peasants, craftsmen and workers stormed Catholic cathedrals, churches and monasteries. They smashed icons and statues of saints, and chased away the priests and monks. The rebels used the money and valuables they had captured to arm their detachments.

A bourgeois revolution began in the Netherlands, a revolution which was to replace the feudal system with the capitalist system.

5. *The Duke of Alba in the Netherlands.* Philip II sent the Duke of Alba, an experienced military leader, and a contingent of skilled troops to the Netherlands. The Duke of Alba was the very man for the task he was entrusted with. Haughty and stubborn, he was pitiless and unrelenting in fighting the enemies of the Spanish king and the Catholic Church. He believed that the executioner's axe and the bonfires of the Inquisition were the most reliable means to govern a country.



The Duke of Alba.
A medal



Rebels destroy a
Catholic cathedral.
16th-century engraving



A session of the "Council of Blood". 16th-century engraving. The judges appointed by Alba sentence people to death hardly examining the evidence; it takes only a few minutes to pass a verdict which sends the man to the gallows.

After arriving in the Netherlands, the Duke of Alba stationed his troops in all the big cities. He established a court to try persons accused of instigating disturbances. "The Council of Blood", as the people called this body, found over 8,000 persons guilty of crimes. A forest of spikes with chopped-off heads crowning them grew in town squares. Scores of heretics were burned at the stake.

Alba wished not only to intimidate the population but also to replenish the Spanish king's treasury. Among those executed were rich merchants and even noblemen. Their property went to the king's treasury. Alba introduced trade taxes which were so high that commerce became unprofitable. Merchants and craftsmen closed down their shops. Many noblemen fled to England and Holland, having sold their property very cheaply.

- ? 1. Why was the geographical position of the Netherlands advantageous? 2. Explain the causes of the bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands: (a) what new features evolved in the economy of the Netherlands in the 16th century; (b) what hampered the development of the country's economy; (c) what sections of the population were dissatisfied, and what were the causes of their discontent; (d) how was this discontent manifested during the reign of Philip II? 3. What event started the revolution in the Netherlands? How many years had passed between the Peasant War in Germany and the beginning of the revolution in the Netherlands?

(Map No. 17)

3. *"It Is Better to Drown the Land Than to Lose It."* At first, the Duke of Alba did not take the uprising of the common people in the north seriously. But soon he realised



William of Orange.
A medal

that he had underestimated the events in the north and moved the whole strength of his army against the rebels.

The Spaniards seized several small towns and exterminated their population. But the people continued to put up an increasingly stubborn resistance. Everywhere, the Spaniards were met with hatred and curses. Instead of obtaining the millions Alba had promised the king, the duke was now abjectly begging him for money to pay the soldiers' wages. Angry with Alba for his failures, Philip II recalled him from the Netherlands.

After Alba's departure, the Spanish army besieged the city of *Leiden*. The whole population of the city rose to its defence. While the men were fighting, women and children built new fortifications. The townspeople were successfully rebuffing enemy attacks and even made daring forays into the enemy camp. Soon, the city ran out of food and famine set in. But when the Spaniards suggested that the townspeople surrender, they replied proudly that each of them was ready to eat his left arm and defend their freedom with the right one.

But the strength of Leiden's defenders was running out. The leaders of the uprising decided that it was better to drown the land than to lose it. The Sea Beggars demolished the dams on the coast, and sea water came pouring onto the fields and villages. The advancing sea made the Spaniards flee in fear. The Beggars entered Leiden; the exhausted defenders were jubilant.

Philip II refused to give in and continued the war. The Spanish soldiers, who had long gone without pay, moved south without waiting for orders, and stormed and destroyed Antwerp, the richest city in the south of the Netherlands. Eight thousand of its citizens were killed or tortured to death; over a thousand houses were destroyed by fire. The devastation was the beginning of Antwerp's decline.

The atrocities of the Spaniards in Antwerp caused indignation in the south of the country. Inhabitants of the southern provinces took up arms, too. In many towns, the craftsmen and the paupers seized power; peasants rose against the feudal lords. Frightened by the revolution, the country's nobility betrayed their people and helped the Spaniards to suppress the uprising in the south. They entered into a deal with Philip II recognising him as their legitimate sovereign ruler. Philip II managed to retain his domination over the south of the country.

4. *The Formation of the Dutch Republic.* In 1579, seven northern provinces formed an anti-Spanish alliance in the city of *Utrecht*. They pledged to unite forever and to spare no effort in opposing attempts to impose Spanish supremacy on them under the pretext of restoring the Roman Catholic Church. The seven provinces formed a state which had one government and a common treasury and army.

Soon, the northern provinces of the Netherlands refused to recognise Philip II as their king. The bourgeoisie wanted to proclaim William of Orange their king, but he was assassinated by a hired killer sent by the Jesuits.

The northern provinces established a republic which was headed by people elected from among the bourgeoisie. The new state was called the *Dutch Republic*, or *Holland*, after the name of the largest northern province. Holland spent 30 years more fighting against Spain. Only in 1609 was a treaty signed by which Spain recognised the independence of Holland.

In the course of the armed struggle of the people of the Netherlands, headed by the bourgeoisie, against the feudal order and Spanish rule, power was transferred from the Spanish feudal lords to the Dutch bourgeoisie.

5. *The Results of the Bourgeois Revolution.* After the country's liberation from Spanish oppression, its economy began to develop very rapidly. Wealthy people opened new manufactories. Big sea vessels were built in the shipyards. The Dutch bourgeoisie no longer had to give part of its profits away to the Spanish feudal lords and was becoming rich quickly.

The bourgeois revolution had cleared the way for the development of capitalism.



Dutch sailor

The money-changer and his wife. From the painting by Quentin Massys (Holland, 17th century)

Dutch convoy. From an 18th-century painting



Holland conducted trade with nearly all European countries. Its merchant fleet was larger than those of all other European countries combined. Ships from all over the world called at *Amsterdam*, which replaced Antwerp as the centre of world trade.

The Dutch bourgeoisie captured many colonies. Dutchmen ousted the Portuguese from Indonesia, subjugated the rural population there and bought up the spices at very cheap prices. Dutch settlements appeared in North America and in the south of Africa.

Nowhere in Europe were the hired workers exploited as mercilessly as in Holland. They received a mere pittance for a long day's work. *The bourgeois revolution replaced oppression by the feudal lords with oppression by the bourgeoisie.*

The revolution in the Netherlands was the first bourgeois revolution which triumphed over the feudal system on a small part of the territory of Western Europe.

- ? 1. On the map, find the areas of peasant uprisings, the cities whose population rose against the Spaniards and the seven provinces which ceded. 2. Prove that the common people played the chief part in the revolutionary struggle against Spain. Cite instances of their heroism. 3. What happened earlier: the destruction of the Spanish Armada or the revolution in the Netherlands? 4. Explain why the liberation struggle of the people of the Netherlands was a bourgeois revolution. What was the outcome of the bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands? What were the consequences of the defeat of the peasants in Germany?

CHAPTER 15

THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY IN FRANCE

In the late Middle Ages, absolute monarchy—a centralised feudal state with an all-powerful king—was established in a number of European countries. The monarchy became particularly strong in 17th-century France.

§ 56. The Strengthening of Centralised Government

(Map No. 19)

1. *The Development of Industry and Trade.* In the 16th-17th centuries, the feudal system continued to exist in France. New classes—the bourgeoisie and the hired workers—also began to emerge in the country. Manufactories appeared which produced linen, silk and woollen fabrics. Twelve thousand workers were employed at silk manufactories in Lyons. Paris was famous for the production of luxury goods—carpets, lace, fancy clothes and glassware. With a population of 300,000, it was the largest city in Europe.

The unification of France promoted the development of trade. The exchange of goods among regions expanded and foreign trade also became brisker. Through Marseilles, France conducted trade with Turkey across the Mediterranean. It also exported considerable quantities of goods to Spain in exchange for the gold and silver Spain received from its colonies. After the geographical discoveries, ports along the

What sections of the population were interested in strengthening the authority of the king in France in the 11th-14th centuries, and why?



At the royal tapestry manufactory. Tapestry (France, 17th century)

The manufactory is visited by King Louis XIV with a large retinue.

western coast of France, especially *Bordeaux*, began to grow rapidly.

The monarchy used the growth of the manufactories and the development of trade in the interests of the nobility. It encouraged the production of luxury articles, woollen fabrics, metals and armaments. Quite a few manufactories belonged to the king himself.

2. *The Bourgeoisie Grows Richer*. Both the French and the English bourgeoisie built up their wealth through the labour of hired workers at manufactories and through trade. In France, however, rich people were not very eager to set up new enterprises and trading houses because of the high taxes they had to pay to the king's treasury. The bourgeoisie was thus deprived of part of its profits, which slowed down the development of industry and trade. Wealthy people did their best to become members of the nobility because the latter, like the clergy, did not have to pay taxes.

Always in need of money, the king created numerous official positions and sold them to wealthy people. Rich men became judges, prosecutors and city counsellors. They received a steady income in the form of salaries, exactions and bribes from the population. The bourgeoisie bought up peasant plots and noblemen's estates. Having bought an official position and an estate, a wealthy man could have a title conferred upon him.

Rich people willingly lent the king money at high interest. To pay back the debt and the interest, the government introduced new taxes. The *loans* made to the king were thus being paid back by the common people.

Taking advantage of the king's constant need for money, the rich *farmed* tax-collecting. The *tax-farmer* gave the king



Receiving hours at a procurator's office.
17th-century engraving

the whole sum of the taxes in advance and then, with the help of the king's troops, squeezed much more money out of the population than what had been paid to the government.

The king and his government used the development of trade and introduction of manufactories to promote the interests of the nobility—to raise the taxes and strengthen the army. The bourgeoisie resented high taxes but still supported the monarchy. *The king gave the bourgeoisie an opportunity to get rich at the expense of the people through loans and tax-farming. This was why the bourgeoisie supported the monarchy.*

3. *The Class Struggle Becomes Sharper.* In an attempt to protect their old rights, large sections of the feudal nobility often rebelled against the king. Bloody internecine wars lasted for over 30 years. Some of the feudal lords were on the side of the Catholic Church, others, mostly noblemen, supported the Protestant Church. These wars came to be known as *religious wars*.

Detachments of mercenaries and noblemen looted and devastated the country. Worn out by high taxes and the soldiers' looting, peasants in many regions of France rebelled. They destroyed castles and houses of the nobility, killed the king's officials and tax-farmers. Their battle-cry was *Aux croquants!* ("Attack the rodents"). *Croquants* (the French word for "rodents" at the time) was the people's name for the nobility, the tax-farmers and royal officials. The peasants believed that these people were the king's enemies, that the king himself cared for the people, and that it was the nobility and the officials who ignored his wishes. The battle-cry of the rebels gave the name to the uprising—the uprising against the *Croquants*. In southwestern France, the uprising involved 40,000 people. Peasant units surrounded cities and, having cut them off from supplies, forced them to surrender. The insurgents put up staunch resistance to the king's troops. Frightened by the peasant uprisings, the noblemen ended internecine wars and rallied around the king. Peasant revolts were suppressed by the king's troops and detachments of noblemen.

The king helped the nobility to keep the peasants under control and to suppress popular uprisings.

4. *Richelieu's Rule.* The nobility and the bourgeoisie supported the monarchy. *Cardinal Richelieu*, first minister to King Louis XIII, used their assistance to strengthen the monarchy. Energetic, cunning and power-hungry, Richelieu in fact ruled France in the name of the weak, indecisive king from 1624 through 1642.



French peasant. 17th-century engraving

Richelieu never convened the Estates General. He replaced many governors of provinces from among the high nobility. Royal officials were sent to the provinces and big cities to make sure that the royal orders were strictly enforced.

Many aristocrats would not tolerate any loss of their influence in state affairs. To remove the all-powerful minister, they staged coups which even involved the wife and brother of the king. But Richelieu ruthlessly suppressed the opposition of the aristocrats, had them arrested on the slightest suspicion and executed many of them.

Some feudal lords hid themselves from Richelieu's wrath behind the walls of their castles. From there, they fought against royal officials and the troops. Richelieu gave the order to demolish the fortified castles of noblemen.

On pain of death, Richelieu prohibited *duels*—fights between noblemen. The arrogant and proud aristocrats would challenge each other to duels if someone so much as looked at them askance. This was an insult which could be washed off with blood alone. Every year, hundreds of noblemen were killed in duels. Richelieu put an end to this. He said that noblemen had a right to shed blood only serving the king.

But, making short shrift of certain recalcitrant feudal lords, Richelieu still furthered the interests of the nobility. He did all he could to strengthen the might of the noblemen's state.

Under Richelieu, uprisings of peasants and townspeople flared up all over France. But the chief minister brutally suppressed them with the help of foreign mercenaries.

During the reign of Richelieu, the opposition of the feudal nobility was almost completely overcome and central authority consolidated in France.



Cardinal Richelieu.
*Portrait by Philippe
de Champaigne (17th
century)*

Cardinal Richelieu was head of the Catholic Church in France and the king's first minister.

§ 57. The Absolute Monarchy in the Second Half of the 17th Century

(Map No. 19)

1. *The Power of the King.* In the second half of the 17th century, *absolute monarchy* in France was already firmly established. The authority of the king was unlimited: the country was governed by the king alone.

The absolute monarchy was at its most powerful under *Louis XIV* (1643-1715). This conceited and hard-hearted king who had a very high opinion of his powers, often said: "I'm



Versailles being built.
From a 17th-century painting
 The palace and the park surrounding it cost the treasury a staggering 150 million francs.



A cart. From the painting by Louis Le Nain (*France, 17th century*)

the state.” He wanted his whims and caprices to be law for all his subjects, even members of the higher nobility. Louis said that his subjects had no rights, only duties.

The decisions which the king took between court balls and hunting parties became laws of the state. To have a new law approved, the king had only to write that such was his will.

The officials were the obedient executors of the king’s will. In no other country were they as numerous as in France. Louis XIV gave his highest officials blank forms with his signature. The official could enter the name of any person he wanted arrested. No one could be sure that the king’s wrath would not catch up with him.

The king introduced new taxes himself. He was accountable to no one for expenditures from the state treasury. From Paris with its frequent disturbances the court moved to the magnificent palace at *Versailles*, 18 km away from the capital. The magnificence and splendour of the French court were imitated by all European monarchs. To flatter Louis XIV, the courtiers called him “the sun”.

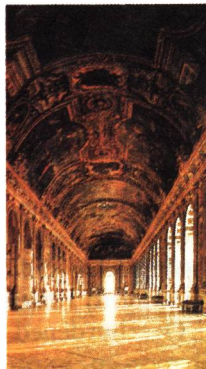
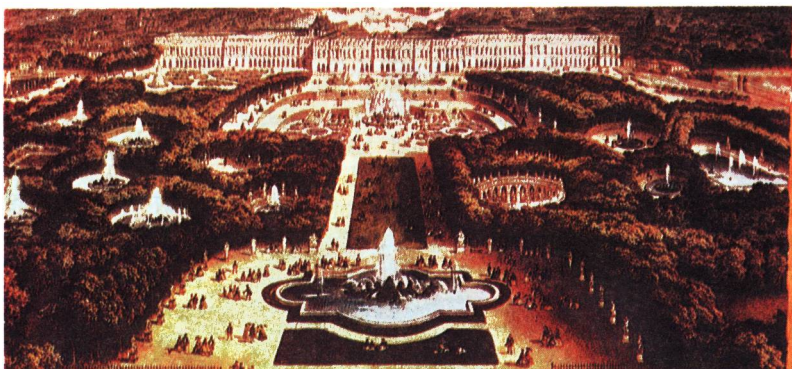
2. *The Way of Life of the Nobility*. The money rent paid by the peasants was not sufficient for the nobility. Many noblemen left their estates and went to the capital to curry favour with the king.

Descendants of proud independent rulers—counts and princes—turned into courtiers. Service in the royal court was very lucrative. The king invented numerous useless official positions for the noblemen. For these *sinecures* (positions which required little or no work) the courtiers received high salaries and valuable gifts.

The courtiers’ “work” began with the king’s awakening.

The palace and the park in Versailles. The park, which has 1,400 fountains and a great number of ponds and canals, is decorated with over 2,000 statues and vases.

The mirror gallery in the Versailles Palace





One person would pull back the bed-curtain, another would hand the king his stockings, and yet another, his boots. It took several dozen people to get the king dressed. A similar ceremony took place when the king was going to bed. Apart from the courtiers, the king and his family had several thousand servants.

The French king had the most magnificent court in Europe. Much money was spent on the construction of palaces, on expensive furniture and carpets. Festivals, balls and masquerades followed one another all year round. The noblemen wore costumes studded with precious stones.

For many noblemen, service in the king's army was their only means of income. The nobility and the clergy were almost fully exempt from taxes. Their titles were inherited; even if a nobleman was ruined, he retained all his privileges.

Trade and industry were considered "lowly" and unworthy occupations for the nobility. If a nobleman opened an enterprise or went into commerce, he was despised. The king deprived him of his most important privilege—tax exemption.

The nobility were the mainstay of the monarchy. The king protected their privileges and supported them at the expense of tax-payers.

3. *The Peasants under the Burden of Taxes.* In the 16th century, the majority of the French peasants were personally free. They did not do *corvée*, as the estates had hardly any plough land belonging to the lord. Cultivated land, divided into small plots, was used by the peasants. Owners of estates received money rent from them. The size of the rent was enshrined by old custom, and all attempts on the part of the nobility to raise it faced growing opposition from the peasants.

Overburdened with taxes and duties, the peasants had little chance to improve their farming methods. Just as centuries

Estate of a high-born nobleman

A nobleman and a peasant. 17th-century engraving. The inscriptions say: "He (the peasant) must pay and please", "All honours go to the lords", "The nobleman is a spider and the peasant is a fly", etc.

What methods did the nobility use to exploit the peasants in the 11th-15th centuries?

Describe the estates in France. What rights and duties did they have?

What was the condition of French peasants like after the Jacquerie?

before, they suffered from crop failures and famine, lived in dark and cramped huts, and wore home-spun clothes and wooden clogs. The peasants could not afford the goods produced by manufactories: after taxes and the rent, they had no money left.

At that time, the peasants suffered particularly from the king's taxes. They were forced to give over to the state more than half of their income from the farm. Often, when the tax-collector arrived, a village would be deserted, its inhabitants hiding in remote places.

More and more land was left uncultivated, and famines followed one after another. Crowds of starving people even came to Versailles to demand bread. The population frequently clashed with the soldiers.

Some peasants, deep in debt with money-lenders, were ruined. In search of work, they went to towns and became hired workers at manufactories.

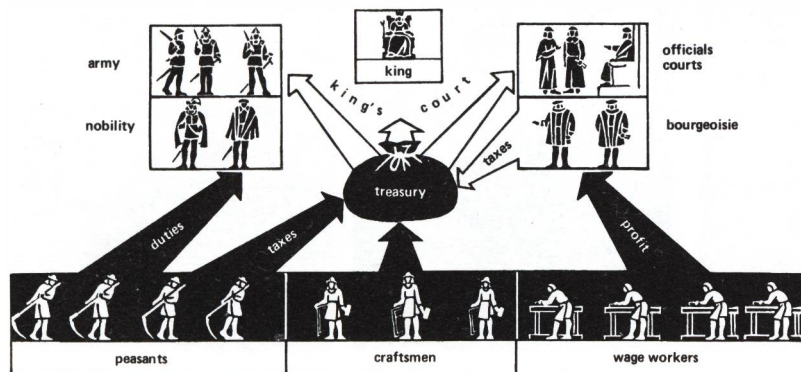
The absolute monarchy was a state of the nobility which used it to mercilessly oppress the masses.

? 1. What were the sources of income of the French bourgeoisie? How did the monarchy use the development of trade and the manufactories? 2. Who exploited the French peasants in the 16th century and how? What is the difference between tax, money rent and duties? 3. What changes took place in the condition of the nobility in the 16th century? What privileges did the French noblemen have? 4. What hampered the development of the manufactories and trade in France? 5. What caused

the class struggle in France to become sharper in the late 16th-early 17th centuries? 6. Whose interests did Richelieu further in persecuting recalcitrant noblemen? In what ways did Richelieu carry on the policy of Louis XIV? 7. Explain what classes supported the absolute monarchy and why. 8. What are the characteristic features of the absolute monarchy? In what ways does it resemble the centralised state of the 14th-15th centuries? What are the differences?



Bronze clock (France, 17th century)



Absolute monarchy in France in the 17th century. How did the king spend the money? Which sections of the population were oppressed, and which reaped all the benefits?

CHAPTER 16

EUROPEAN CULTURE IN THE PERIOD FROM THE LATE 15th THROUGH THE FIRST HALF OF THE 17th CENTURY

Beginning in the late 15th century, a movement against the declining feudal system began to unfold in the more advanced European countries. The people's views also underwent a drastic change. Culture reached an unprecedented level in its development; science, literature and art were progressing rapidly.

§ 58. The Origins and Distinctive Features of Renaissance Culture

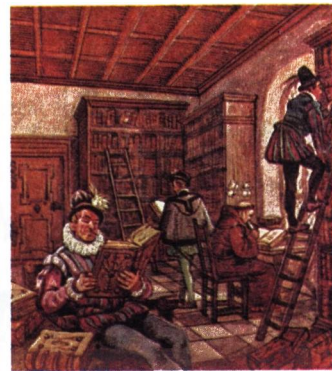
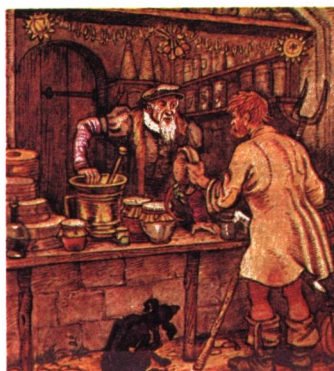
1. *What Caused the Flourishing of Culture.* Italy was the first country to experience a flourishing of culture. In the rich Italian cities, the crafts and trade were developing apace. In the 14th century, many manufactories had already been built and the bourgeoisie began to emerge.

The bourgeoisie had an entirely new world outlook. While the feudal nobility became rich mostly through wars of plunder and seizure of land, the bourgeoisie grew wealthy through trade and the exploitation of hired workers. This was an industrious and enterprising class. In quest of wealth, merchants ventured on long and perilous journeys.

When it first emerged, the bourgeoisie encouraged the de-

Urban culture of the 15th-17th centuries.

1. At the chemist's.
2. An astronomer.
3. In the university library.



velopment of science and technology. Competition among the owners of enterprises promoted the development and introduction of new machinery and equipment. Accurate calculations made it possible to quickly build huge structures and made the construction of fortresses, ports and canals much easier.

The rich townsmen knew the value of time: the accumulation of wealth and the success of their ventures depended on how they spent it. They wanted to get as much pleasure as possible in this life, not after death. They competed with one another in the magnificence of their palaces, household objects, furniture and clothes. Orders for works of art were now coming not only from the church and the higher nobility, but from wealthy townspeople as well. Architects built large houses commissioned by the rich, and painters and sculptors decorated the buildings with pictures and statues.

The growing cities required more and more educated professionals: accountants, lawyers, engineers, technicians, teachers and physicians. A new section of the population, the *intelligentsia*—a distinct group of people who were engaged in intellectual labour—began to appear in towns. Many of them were born in the families of common townspeople.

The flowering of culture in the West European countries in the 15th-16th centuries was linked with the emergence of a new class—the bourgeoisie.

2. *A New Interest in Man and Nature.* Church doctrines which stated that man was helpless and pathetic, and that God alone was all-powerful, were refuted by life itself. Faith in man's strength and abilities was reborn. The new artists and writers were not interested in God; they were thrilled by man and his deeds. That is why they were called *humanists*.

The ascetic life style advocated by religion was replaced

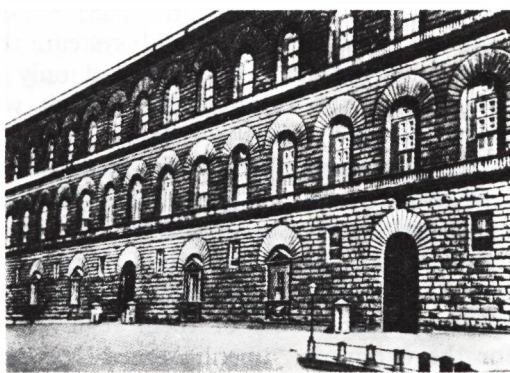
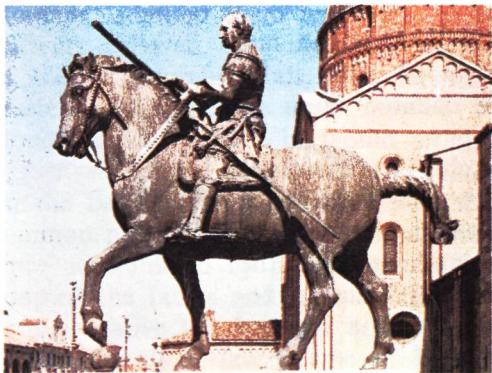
Describe the influence of the church on culture in the Early Middle Ages. How did people's view of the world change in the 11th-13th centuries?



Palazzo Vecchio in the Square of Signoria, Florence (14th-15th centuries)

Equestrian statue of military leader Gattamelata. By Donatello (late 15th century)

A palazzo



by a lively interest in the world. Carefully examining nature, scholars made observations and conducted experiments. They wanted to find explanations for natural phenomena and to arrive at the causes thereof. The first botanical and zoological gardens, museums and collections of minerals and plants were founded in Europe. Men of letters wrote about nature and its beauty; artists began painting landscapes.

The links between science and art were growing stronger. Painters and sculptors studied the human body to gain insight into the way men moved; they learned mathematics to ensure the correct proportions in their statues and paintings.

Writers were now interested in describing real people with all their joys and sorrows. They wrote about their eventful times and gave expression to the people's strong feelings. Artists began to paint portraits of their contemporaries, not only kings and rulers but common people too. They used real people as models even when painting saints. Priests and monks were horrified and indignant when they recognised the faces of pretty ladies in the icons.

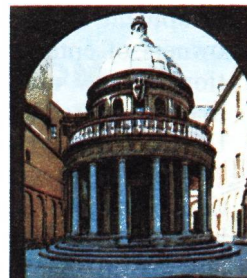
The humanists thought that the supreme goal was to work for the common good, not to serve God or perform military feats. They wanted to help create harmoniously developed man, a man whose soul, body, thoughts and feelings would all be beautiful.

3. *Attitudes Towards the Feudal Nobility and the Church.*

The humanists opposed the division of the people into estates. They ridiculed the feudal lords for their idleness and arrogance. Many Renaissance artists and writers scoffed at the uncouth and idle feudal lords. An Italian writer said that to pride oneself on one's high birth meant to pride oneself on one's descent from brigands. He insisted that fame and nobility of character could be attained only by man's own efforts.

While criticising the feudal system, the humanists did not reject it altogether. They dreamed only of "improving" it by enlightening the ruling classes which were counted upon to make life easier for the common people.

The humanists sharply criticised the church. The ignorance and stupidity of the clergy and the monks, and the avarice and thirst for power of the popes were permanent targets of mockery for the progressive Renaissance authors. But the humanists did not give up faith in God and remained religious people. Some of them regarded religion as a harness for the common, "unenlightened" people.



Church in Rome. By Bramante (early 16th century)

This was the first Italian Renaissance structure with the parts in correct proportion to one another.



4. *An Interest in the Culture of Antiquity.* The humanists were very interested in the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. As distinct from church art, the culture of antiquity was full of joy, it glorified the beauty of man.

The culture of Antiquity, a non-Christian culture condemned by the church and partially forgotten in the preceding centuries, was being reborn. That is why the time when the new culture emerged was called the *Renaissance*. The historical period between Antiquity and the Renaissance was declared a time of ignorance and spiritual darkness. The humanists were the first to call this period the Middle Ages.

In monastery basements, collectors of antiques found old manuscripts; statues of Greek gods and heroes were dug up from the earth. These finds were very much sought after. Connoisseurs of art were prepared to spend all their money on statues and manuscripts. Humanist scholars had a very good knowledge of Latin and Greek, the languages of Pericles and Augustus.

The humanists studied the works of ancient Greeks and Romans, admired them and tried to emulate them. But the ancients believed that man was a mere toy in the hands of the all-powerful gods. The humanists portrayed man as master of his destiny and believed his talents and energy alone decided whether he would attain his goal.

5. *Renaissance Culture and the People.* Renaissance art drew on the best achievements of medieval culture created by the common people. Architects and sculptors used the rich experience accumulated by generations of town craftsmen. Writers adapted the fables and tales of the townspeople. They wrote in their native tongues and not in Latin.

Before, only a few people of high birth knew about the

Portrait of a Boy.
By Pinturicchio (15th
century)

Head of Venus. *Frag-
ment from The Birth
of Venus by Sandro
Botticelli (16th cen-
tury)*

What feelings and
thoughts did me-
dieval artists con-
vey in statues
and icons?

affairs of the state and the church. But after the printing press was invented, and especially during the Reformation, the writers began to address their works to common people, and wrote in their mother tongue. More and more people had access to information about things going on in the world. From behind the walls of monasteries and universities, knowledge found its way into the town streets and squares.

Renaissance was a time of great change in culture and science.

- ?
1. What caused the flowering of culture in the 15th-16th centuries?
 2. What is the meaning of the term "humanist", and why was the new culture called the Renaissance? Why were the humanists interested in the culture of ancient Greece and Rome?
 3. What was the attitude of the Renaissance artists and writers towards the feudal lords and the church? 4. How did the link between Renaissance culture and the folk urban culture manifest itself?

§ 59. The Flowering of Italian Art

1. Major Centres of Renaissance Culture. On an important trade route from Rome to the Alps stood Florence, a beautiful large city. In the late 13th century, it was ruled by the townspeople themselves, and the feudal lords had no say in city affairs. Florence had many cloth-making and merchants' shops. Not only merchants and feudal lords, but popes and kings borrowed large sums of money from the wealthy citizens of Florence. The rich patronised painters and poets and commissioned works of art for which they paid lavishly.

Florence became the cultural centre of Italy as a whole. Famous painters, sculptors and architects taught their art to talented youths. Rome, Venice and *Milan* were also renowned for their brilliant masters.

Popes, kings and rulers of Italian city-states competed for the honour of having Italian painters stay at their courts.

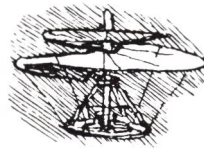
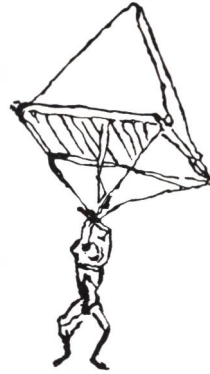
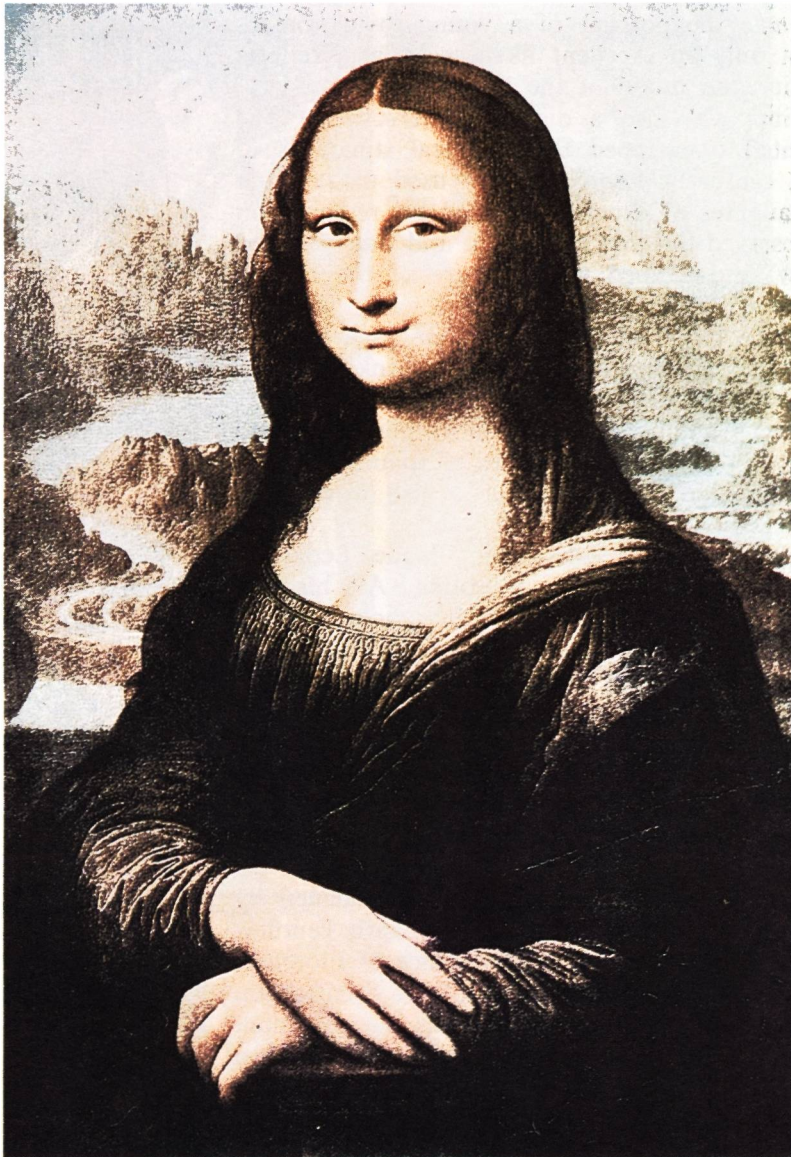
2. Leonardo da Vinci. One of the greatest figures of the Italian Renaissance was *Leonardo da Vinci* (1452-1519), a Florentine. His father was a wealthy citizen; his mother came from a peasant family. Leonardo da Vinci had many talents: he was a great painter, a scientist, an engineer famous for many inventions, an architect and a sculptor, a musician and a poet. He worked diligently even as a child. Difficulties and obstacles could not dampen his spirit – he only



Leonardo da Vinci.
Self-portrait

grew stronger in overcoming them. He told his pupils that happiness was the lot of those who worked hard.

Leonardo's paintings portray the life which he loved and studied. He liked to wander around city streets and squares looking at people and making sketches. He was attracted by faces which expressed joy or sorrow. At the risk of



Designs by Leonardo da Vinci: a man descending on a parachute; an air-driven propeller for getting a flying machine up

La Gioconda. By Leonardo da Vinci

incurring the wrath of the Inquisition, the great artist dissected corpses, seeking to understand the human body so as to be able to represent it accurately in his pictures. He was very good at conveying the elusive play of light and shadow, which made his work very realistic.

Leonardo da Vinci as a painter was interested most of all in man and his emotions. People the world over know his painting *La Gioconda*, the portrait of a young townswoman. The portrait is not only an excellent likeness; it also reflects the inner personality and mood of the model.

Leonardo da Vinci was also a distinguished scholar. The machines he invented outstripped the technical standards of his day by several centuries. Leonardo who used to say that wisdom was the daughter of experience based his research on observation. He observed the tide coming in and out, watched the way birds flew, and studied the structure of the human eye. Leonardo dreamed of making man's work easier with the help of science. Contemporaries appreciated him as a brilliant engineer; a long canal supplying Milan with drinking water was built from his design.

Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks were full of blueprints and plans. The designs included lathes, looms, a spinning wheel, an excavator, turbines and cranes. Leonardo also worked on designs for a parachute and a helicopter.

Pride and the need to be independent made Leonardo change his customers and patrons quite often. All his life, he wandered from place to place and died in France, far from his native city.

3. *Michelangelo*. Another great Renaissance figure was *Michelangelo* (1475-1564), a sculptor, painter, architect, military engineer and poet. He had a thorough knowledge of anatomy, and was brilliant at portraying the beauty of the human body. Michelangelo said that each block of marble concealed a human figure, and one only had to remove everything superfluous to release it.

Michelangelo was devoted to his country and saddened by the calamities which befell Italy in the early 16th century. He took part in the struggle for the independence of Florence, helping defend it from the enemy as head of the fortification project. His statues and paintings reflect his ideal—a man ready for struggle, a hero willing to sacrifice himself to save his country. Michelangelo portrayed people with powerful bodies, a strong will and a courageous, indomitable spirit.

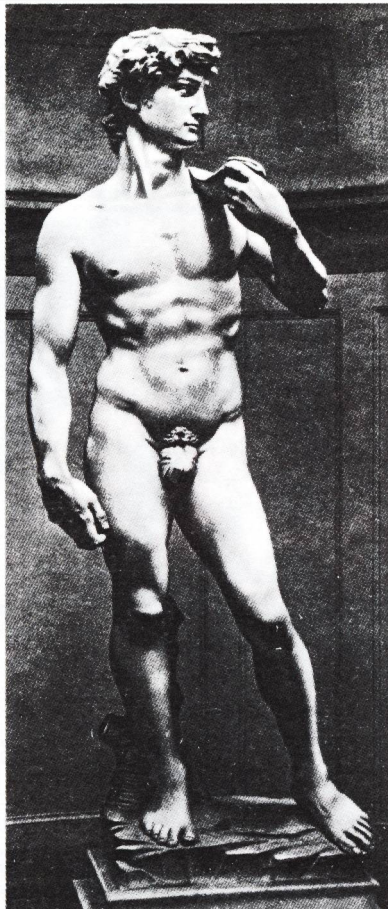
From a huge block of marble, he sculpted his *David*, a sta-



Michelangelo. *Self-portrait*



Rebellious Slave. *By Michelangelo*



David. *By Michelangelo*



St. Peter's Cathedral
in Rome

tue which is five and a half metres high. Contemporaries called it the Giant. Michelangelo moulded the legendary young shepherd who dared to pit his strength against a huge man, winning the fight by hitting him with a stone. *David* stands



Sistine Madonna. By
Raphael

in the central square of Florence and is considered the patron of the city.

Michelangelo took part in the construction of *St. Peter's cathedral* in Rome. A group of famous architects spent several decades building the cathedral. Michelangelo made the designs for its huge dome. St. Peter's cathedral is one of the best specimens of Renaissance architecture.

The work of Michelangelo epitomised all the best features of Renaissance culture, the admiration for the strength and courage of man and faith in human reason.

4. *Raphael*. One of the greatest Renaissance painters was *Raphael* (1483-1520). He liked to paint people who were beautiful, intelligent and noble.

In his youth, Raphael lived in Florence, where he created many of his best works. Invited to Rome, Raphael painted portraits, supervised the construction of St. Peter's cathedral and conducted archaeological excavations.

Many of Raphael's paintings depict madonnas. These are not icons. Raphael portrayed a mother and her tender love for the child; in her, he extolled the human being who is capable of great sacrifice for the sake of the people's happiness. Raphael painted his most famous picture, the *Sistine Madonna*, for the church of St. Sixtus in a small Italian town. This work of genius reflects the artist's great love for humanity. *The great artists of the Renaissance produced masterpieces which continue to delight mankind.*



Raphael. *Self-portrait*

- ? 1. What features of the new art are embodied in Leonardo da Vinci's *La Gioconda*? How did painting lead him to scientific research? 2. What ideas did Michelangelo convey in his statue *David*? How does it strike you? 3. Compare the *Sistine Madonna* with

Our Lady of Vladimir. How does Raphael's picture differ from the icon? 4. What were the common features of the work of the three greatest Renaissance artists? What features of Renaissance culture are reflected in their work?

§ 60. The Great Artists of Germany, the Netherlands and Spain

The Italian Renaissance greatly influenced the arts in other European countries. The great artists of Germany, the Netherlands and Spain assimilated the achievements of Italian artists and made their own contribution to world art.

1. *Albrecht Dürer*. The flourishing of Renaissance art in Germany in the early 16th century was directly connected with the Reformation and with the struggle against feudal oppression. German humanists sharply criticised the feudal order and the Catholic Church.

A leading progressive artist of the time was *Albrecht Dürer* (1471-1528). He had travelled extensively in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands in order to become acquainted with the artistic achievements of those countries. Dürer stood apart among German artists by virtue of his talent, diversity of interests and extensive knowledge. He was an artist, engineer, architect, expert in ancient languages and a poet.

With the invention of the printing press, drawings could be reprinted and thus made accessible to many people. Artists carved pictures on wood or etched them with acid on copper plates. Then these were covered with paint, and paper was pressed over them, producing *engravings and etchings*.

Since he was a young man Dürer made engravings to illustrate printed books. The works he produced conveyed the mood of unrest prevailing in Germany before the Reformation. This made Dürer's engravings and paintings very popular throughout the country.

Dürer was also one of the world's greatest portrait painters. He studied the laws of perspective and attached great importance to correct proportions. Seeking to convey the richness of man's inner world, he painted the portraits of courageous, talented people with strong personalities.

2. *Rembrandt van Rijn*. The flourishing of art in the Netherlands was linked with the victory of the bourgeois revolution. It was no longer the church that placed orders for paintings (the Protestant churches had no icons) but wealthy citizens who wished to decorate their homes. They liked pictures representing landscapes, interiors of dwellings, and scenes from everyday life. Among the genres well developed in Holland were portraiture, landscapes and still life. Perhaps the greatest Dutch painter was *Rembrandt van Rijn* (1606-1669). He worked tirelessly all his life: hundreds of his paintings and engravings and over a thousand drawings have come down to us. Rembrandt achieved fame when he settled in Amsterdam. He was overwhelmed with orders for pictures, and had many pupils.

Rembrandt concentrated mostly on depicting people, their character and emotions. He painted scenes from everyday life, pictures on religious subjects, portraits of his customers and



Albrecht Dürer. Self-portrait



Rembrandt. Self-portrait (fragment)



Four Horsemen. By
Albrecht Dürer
Charging forward
are four riders re-
morselessly bringing
the people death, in-
justice, and war.

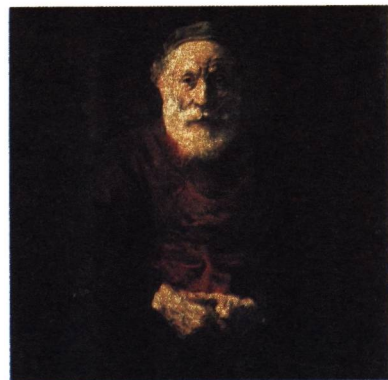
Portrait of a Young
Man. By Albrecht
Dürer



The Return of the
Prodigal Son. By
Rembrandt



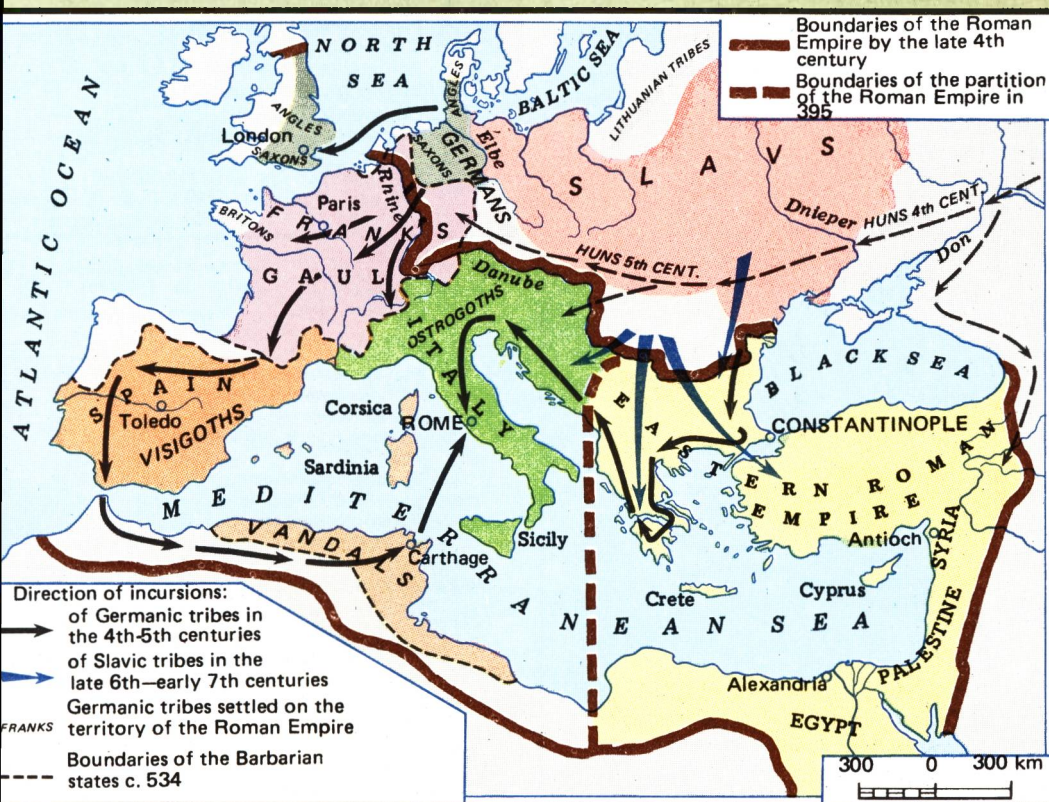
Portrait of an Old
Woman. By *Rem-
brandt*



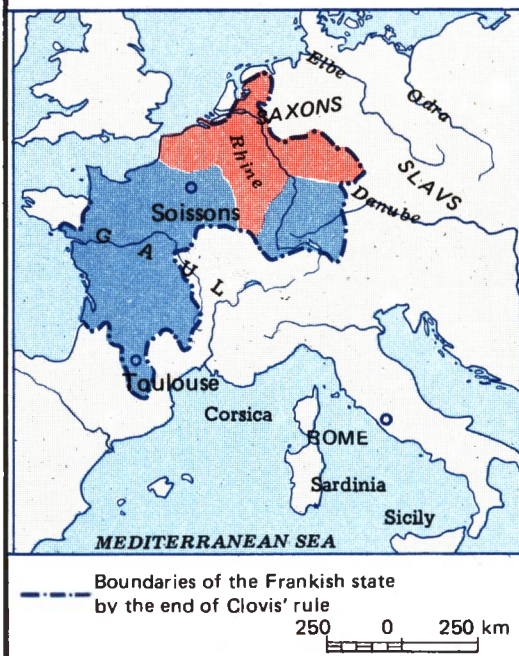
Portrait of an Old
Man. By *Rembrandt*

MAPS

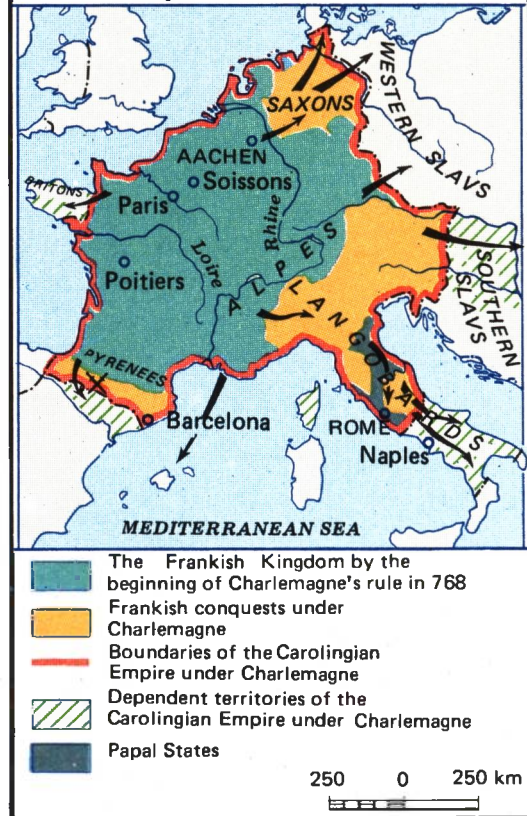
THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE INCURSIONS OF GERMANIC AND SLAVIC TRIBES IN THE 4th-7th CENTURIES



a. Formation of the Frankish Kingdom



b. Frankish conquests in the late 8th and early 9th centuries



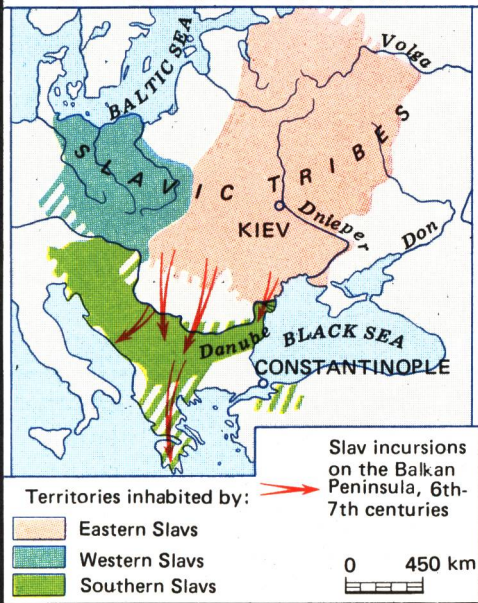
c. Division of the Carolingian Empire



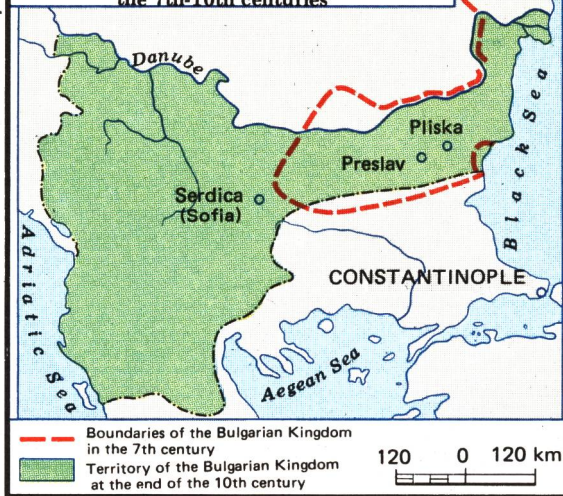
- (a) Point out the territory inhabited by the Franks before the migration and the area where they settled after the conquests made in the 6th century.
- (b) What do the arrows in the map designate? Find the site where Roland's troops perished.
- (c) Compare the state boundaries in 843 and in the late 11th century (see Map 7). What makes them different?

2. FORMATION AND DISINTEGRATION OF THE CAROLINGIAN EMPIRE

a. Three branches of the Slavs



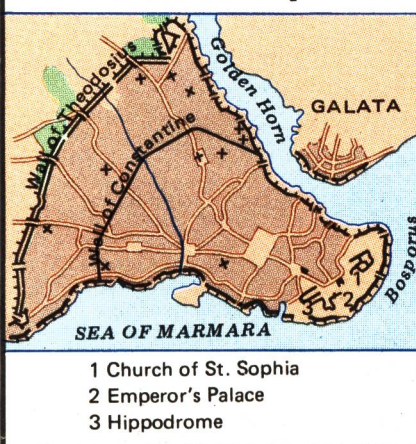
b. Bulgarian Kingdom in the 7th-10th centuries

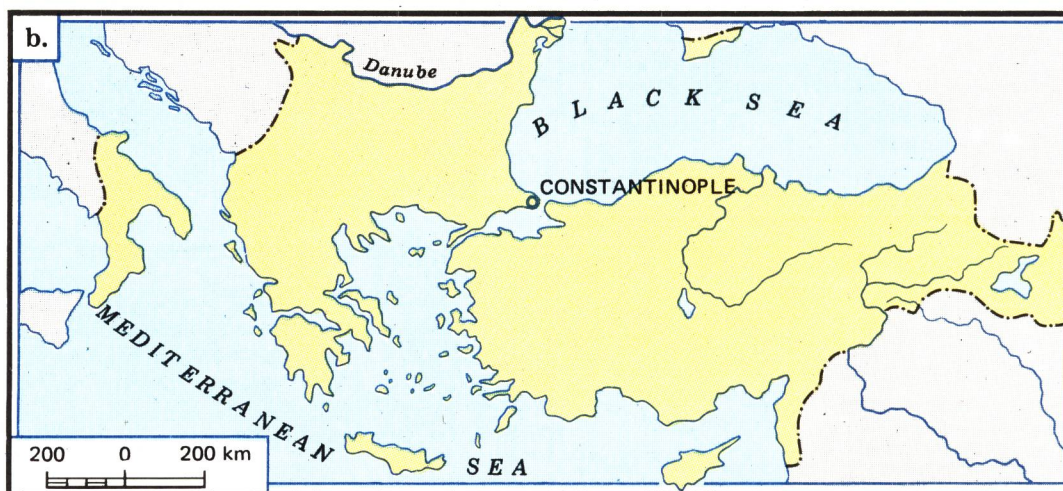
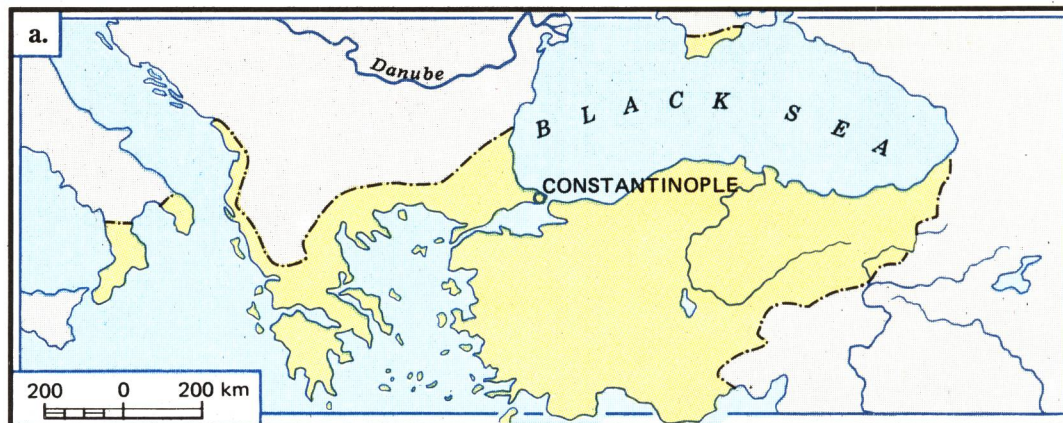


c. Byzantine Empire and Slavic states in the 11th century



d. Constantinople





a. mid-6th century

b. mid-9th century

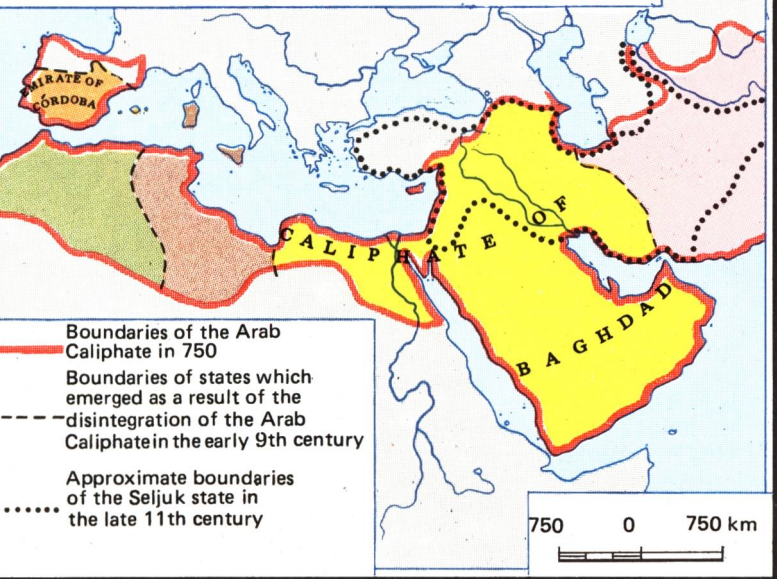
c. mid-11th century

4. BYZANTINE EMPIRE FROM THE MID-6TH CENTURY TO THE MID-11TH CENTURY

a. Arab conquests in the 7th-9th centuries



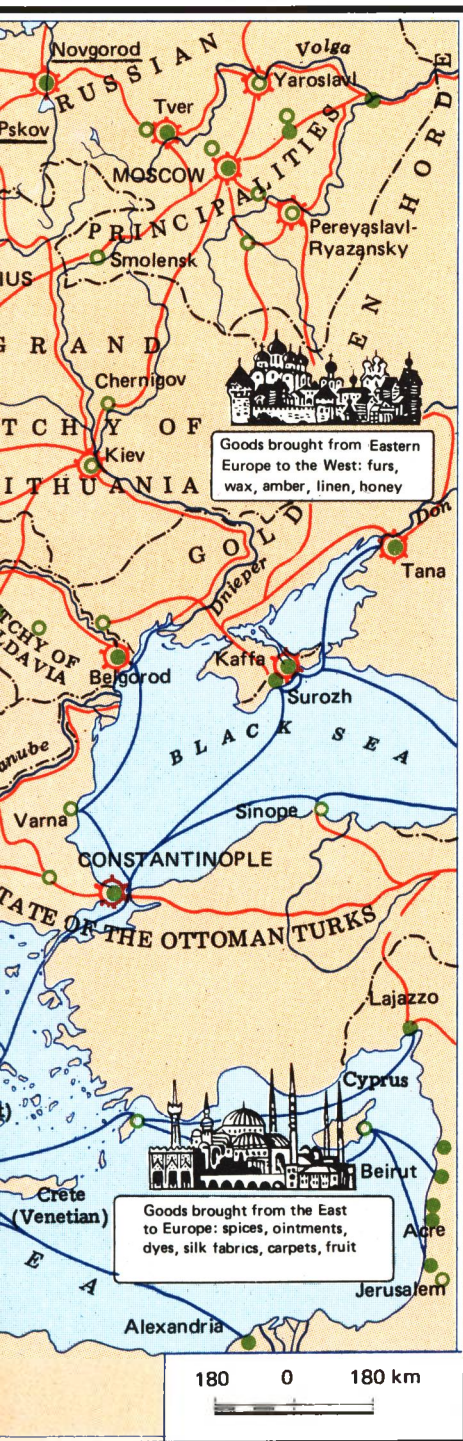
b. Disintegration of the Caliphate (8th-9th centuries)



- (a) Point out the areas of major popular uprisings in the Caliphate.
- (b) Point out the site of the battle between the Franks and the Arabs where the advance of the Arabs was checked.

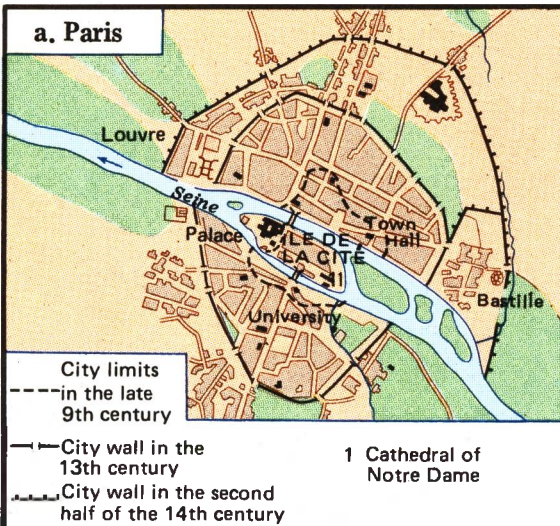


6. DEVELOPMENT OF CRAFTS AND TRADE IN EUROPE

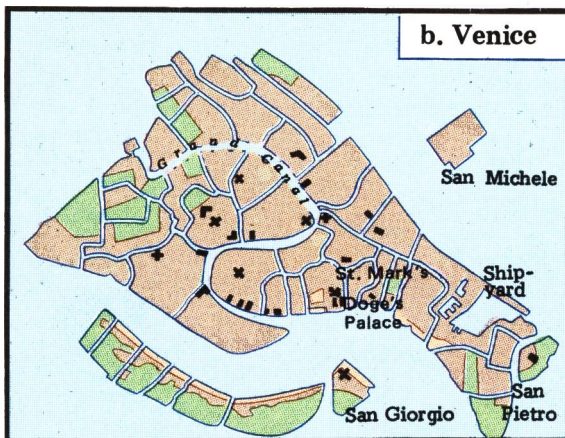


THE 14TH CENTURY

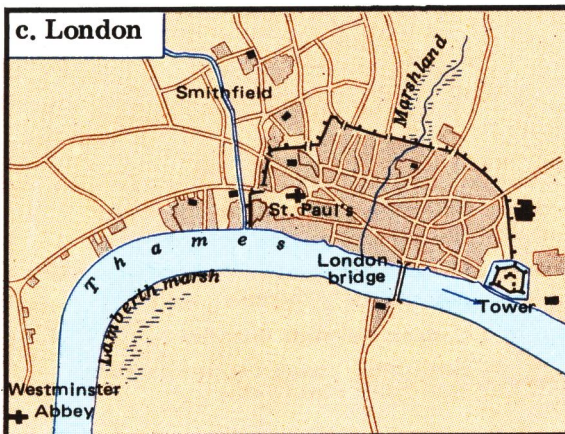
a. Paris

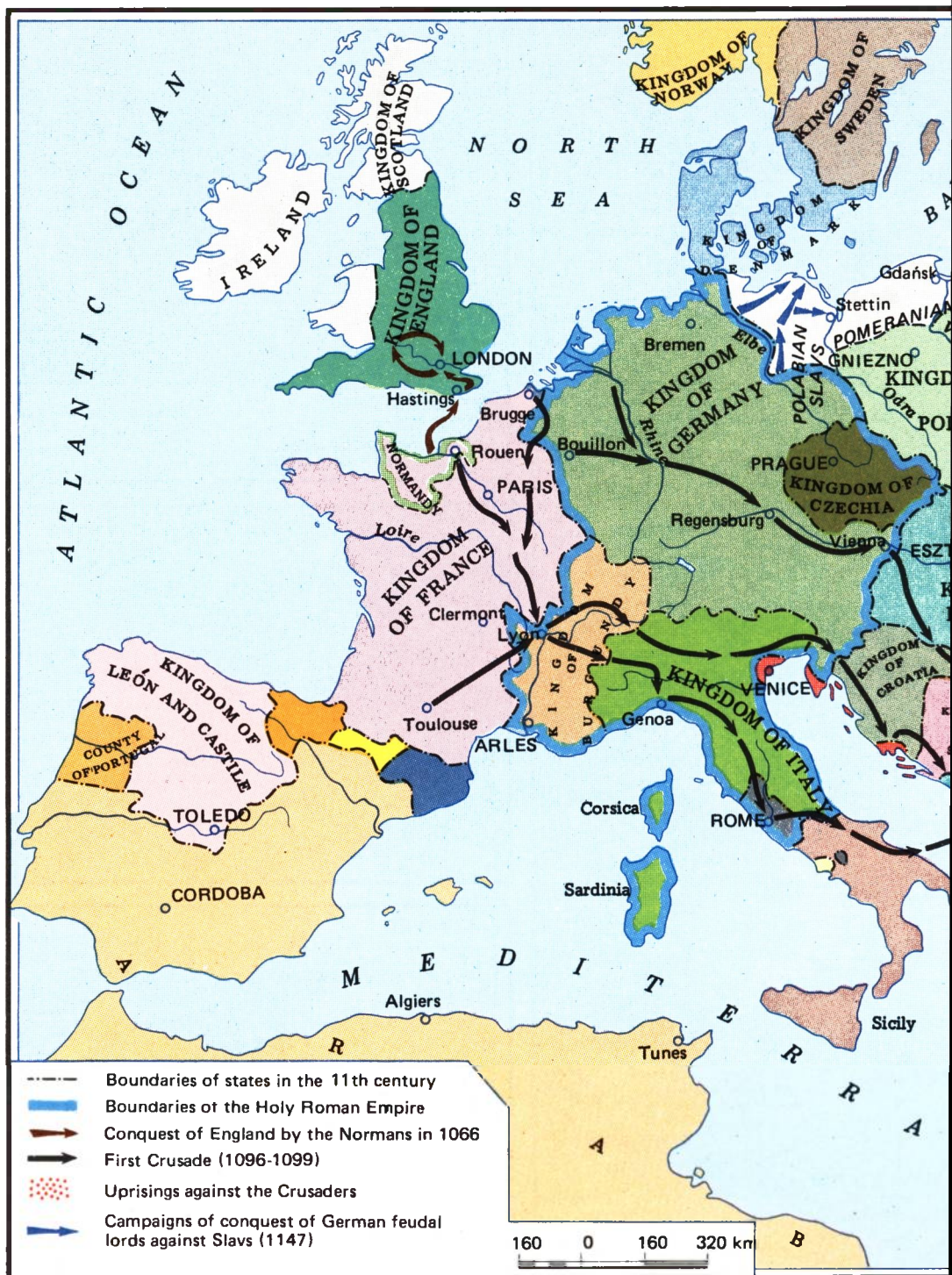


b. Venice

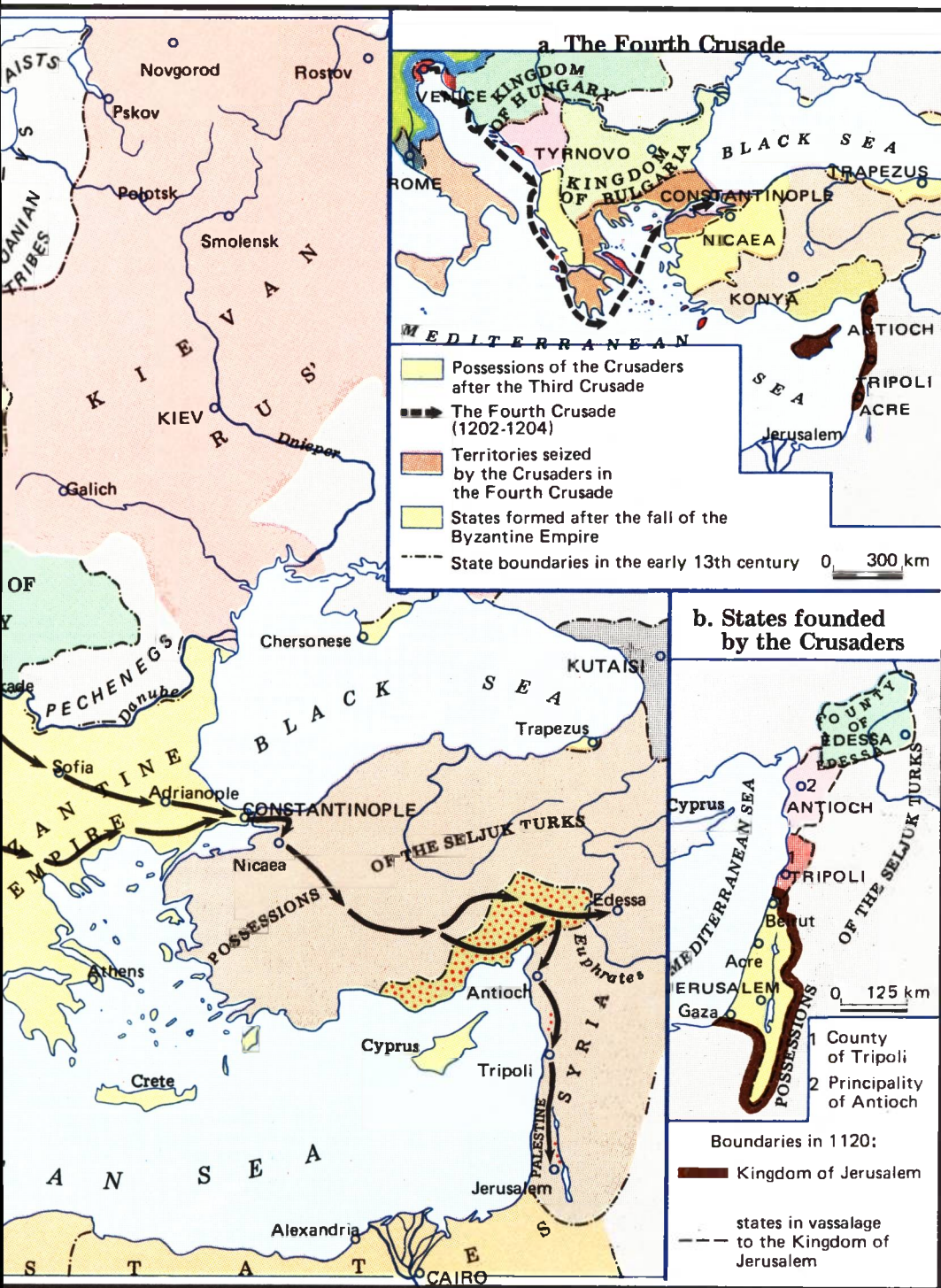


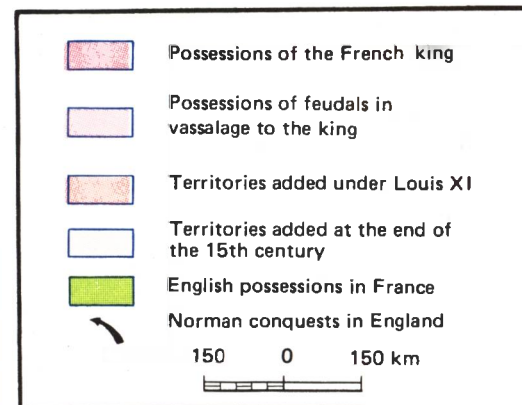
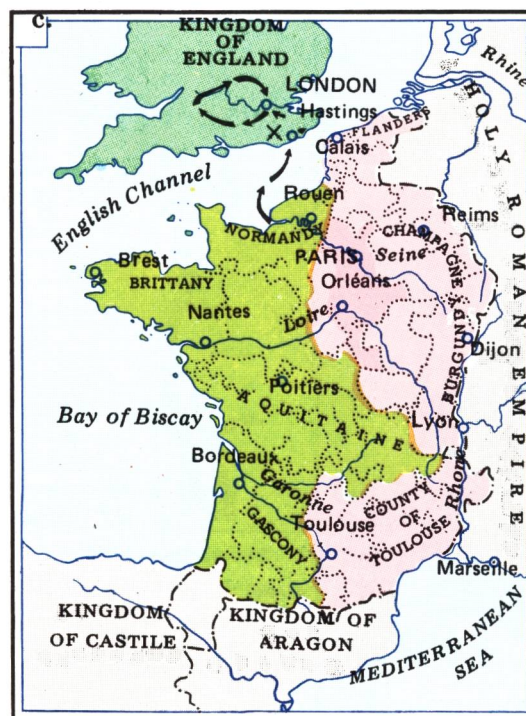
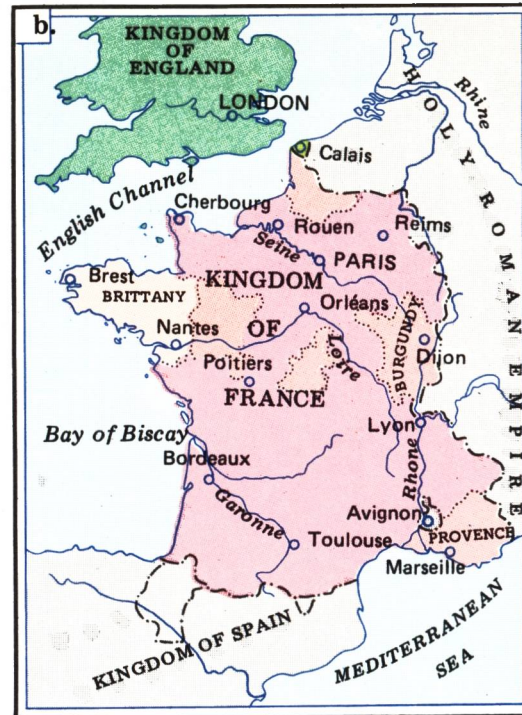
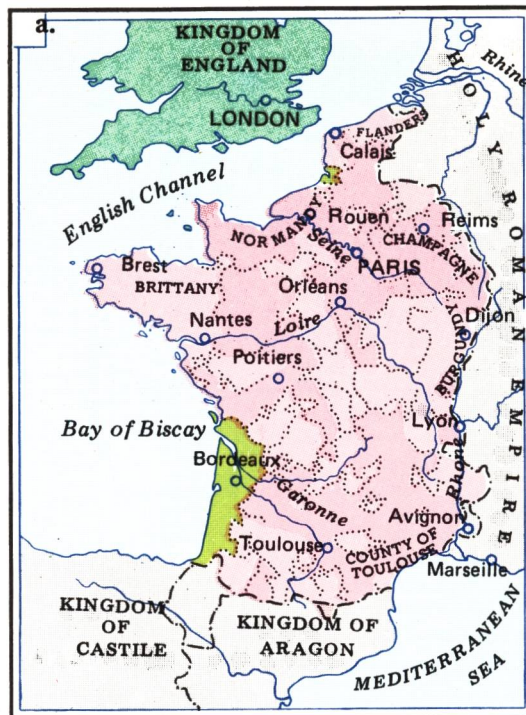
c. London





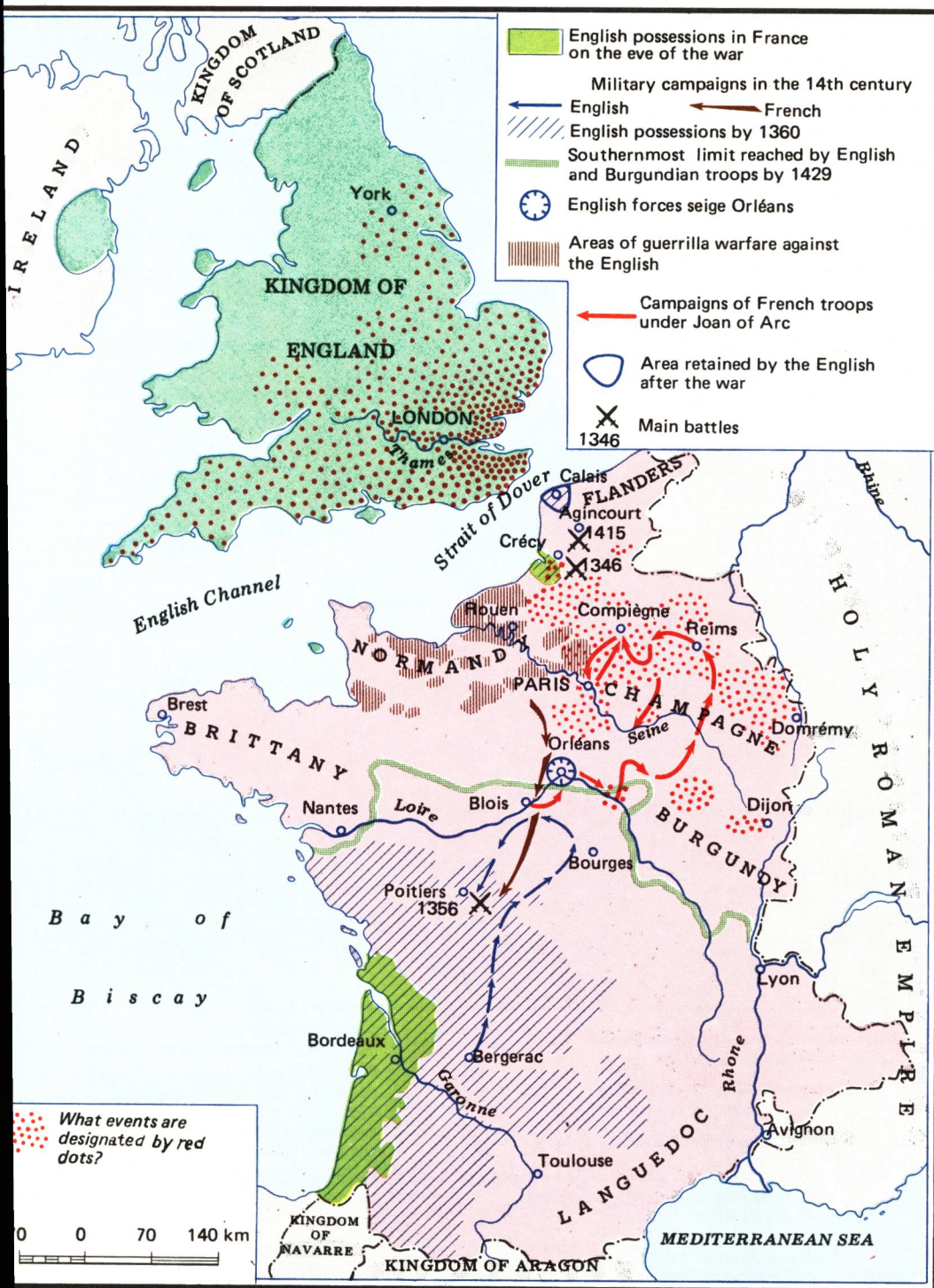
7. EUROPE IN THE 11TH-EARLY 12TH CENTURIES



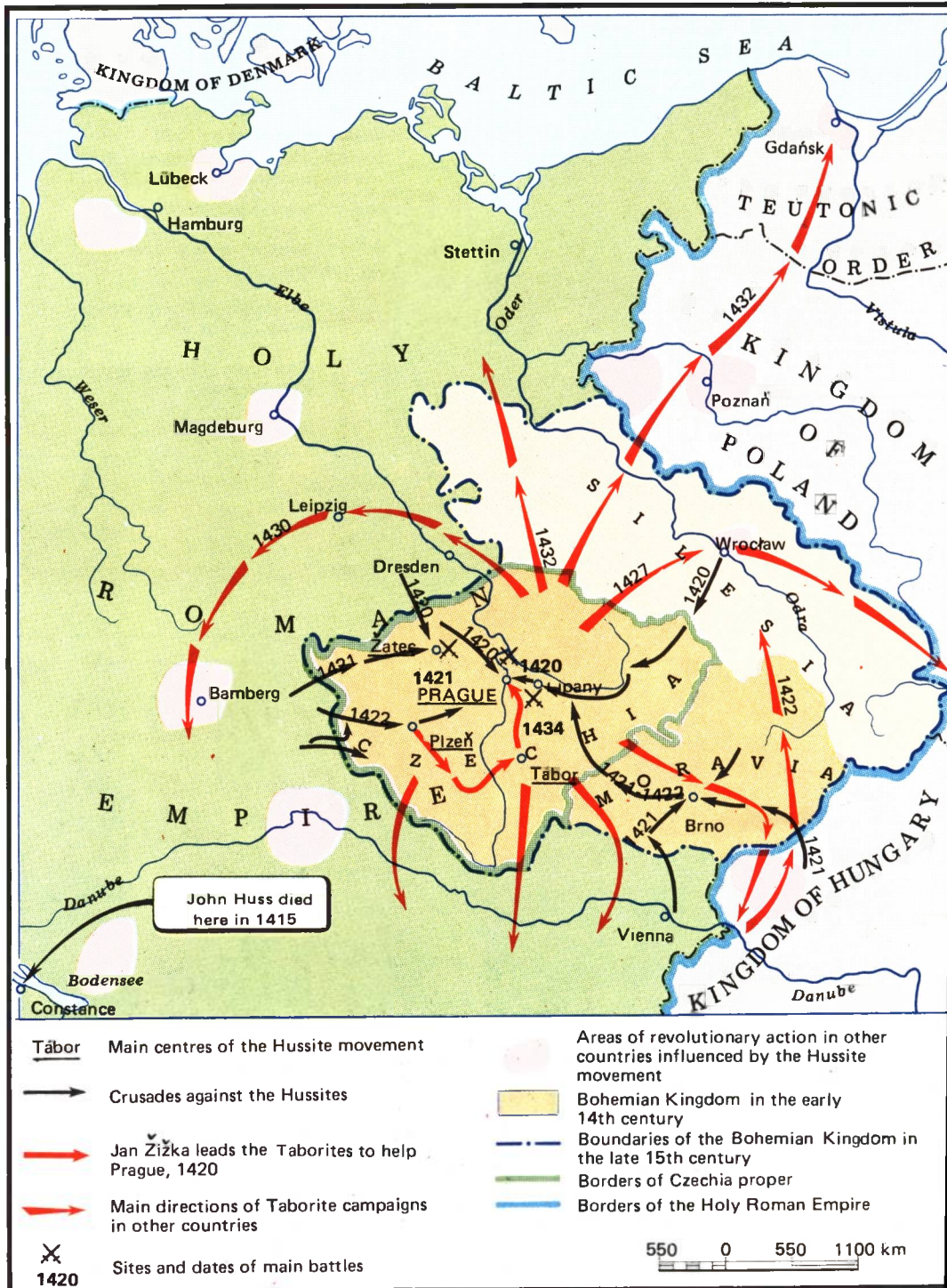


Point out the boundaries of France in the 12th century; in the early 14th century; and in the late 15th century.

8. UNIFICATION OF FRANCE



9. ENGLAND AND FRANCE DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR (1337-1453)



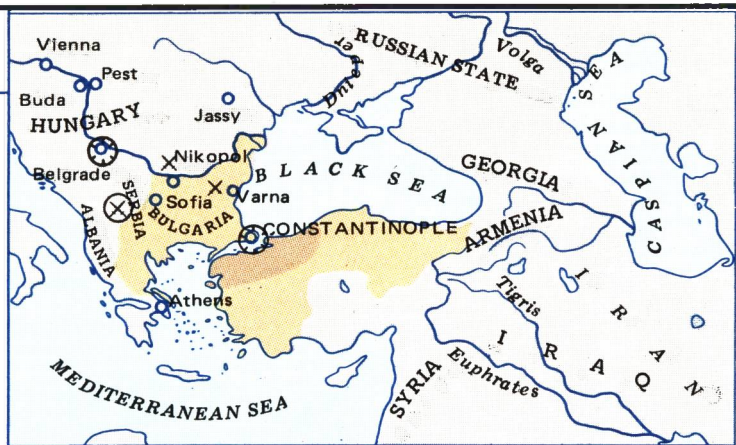
10. HUSSITE WARS (1419-1434)

a. Ottoman conquests in the 14th-15th centuries

- Possessions of the Ottoman Turks in the mid-14th century
- Territories conquered by the Ottoman Turks by the mid-15th century

Find the site of the Battle of Kossovo (1389) where the Serbs were defeated.

350 0 350 700km



b. Territories conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the 16th-17th centuries



- Possessions of Ottoman Turks in the mid-15th century
- Territories conquered by Ottoman Turks by the beginning of the 16th century
- Territories conquered by Ottoman Turks in the 16th-17th centuries
- Areas of popular liberation uprisings in the 16th-17th centuries
- Boundaries of states in the mid-17th century

✕ Point out and name the sites of major battles and sieges of cities by the Ottoman Turks.

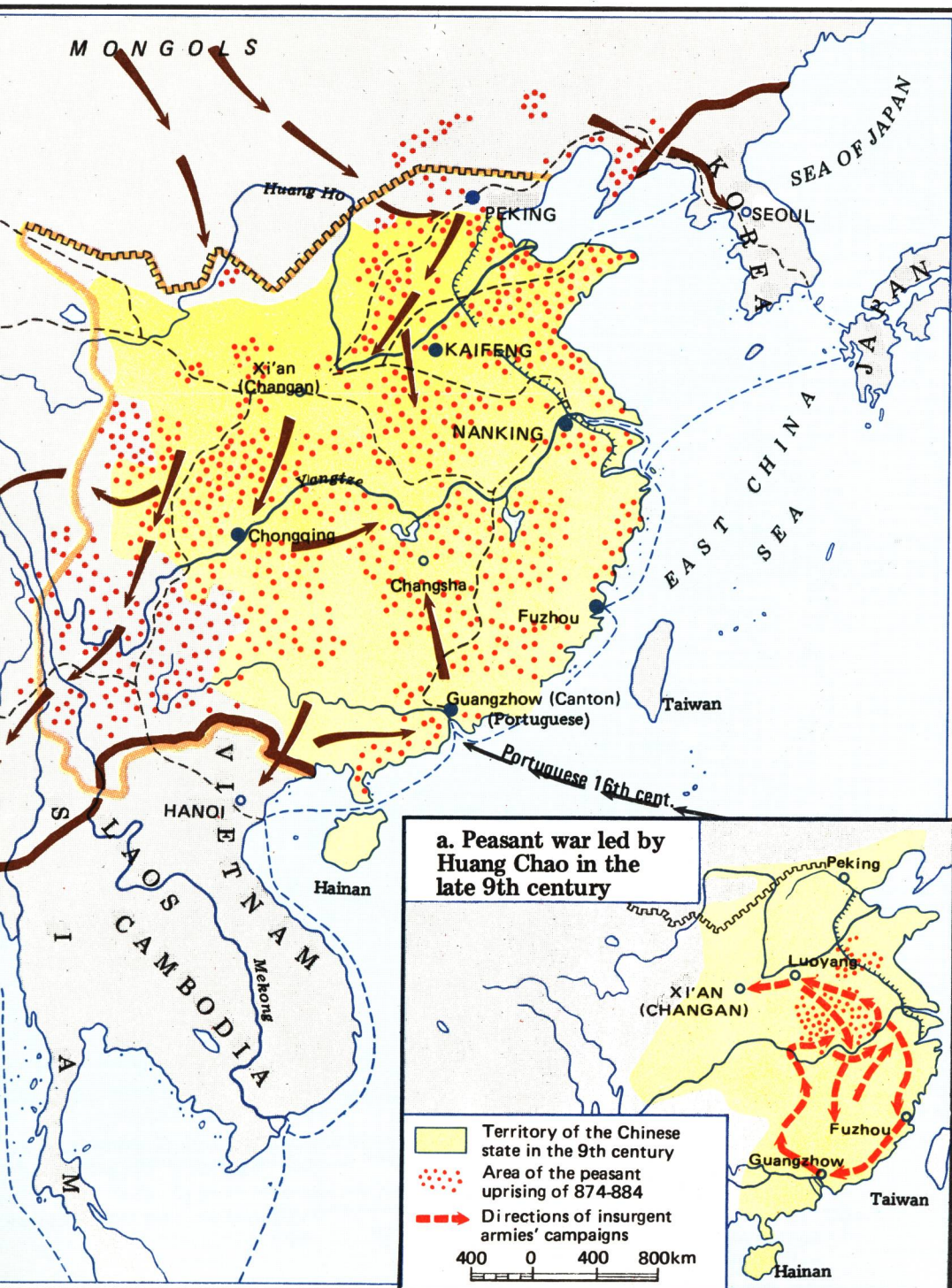


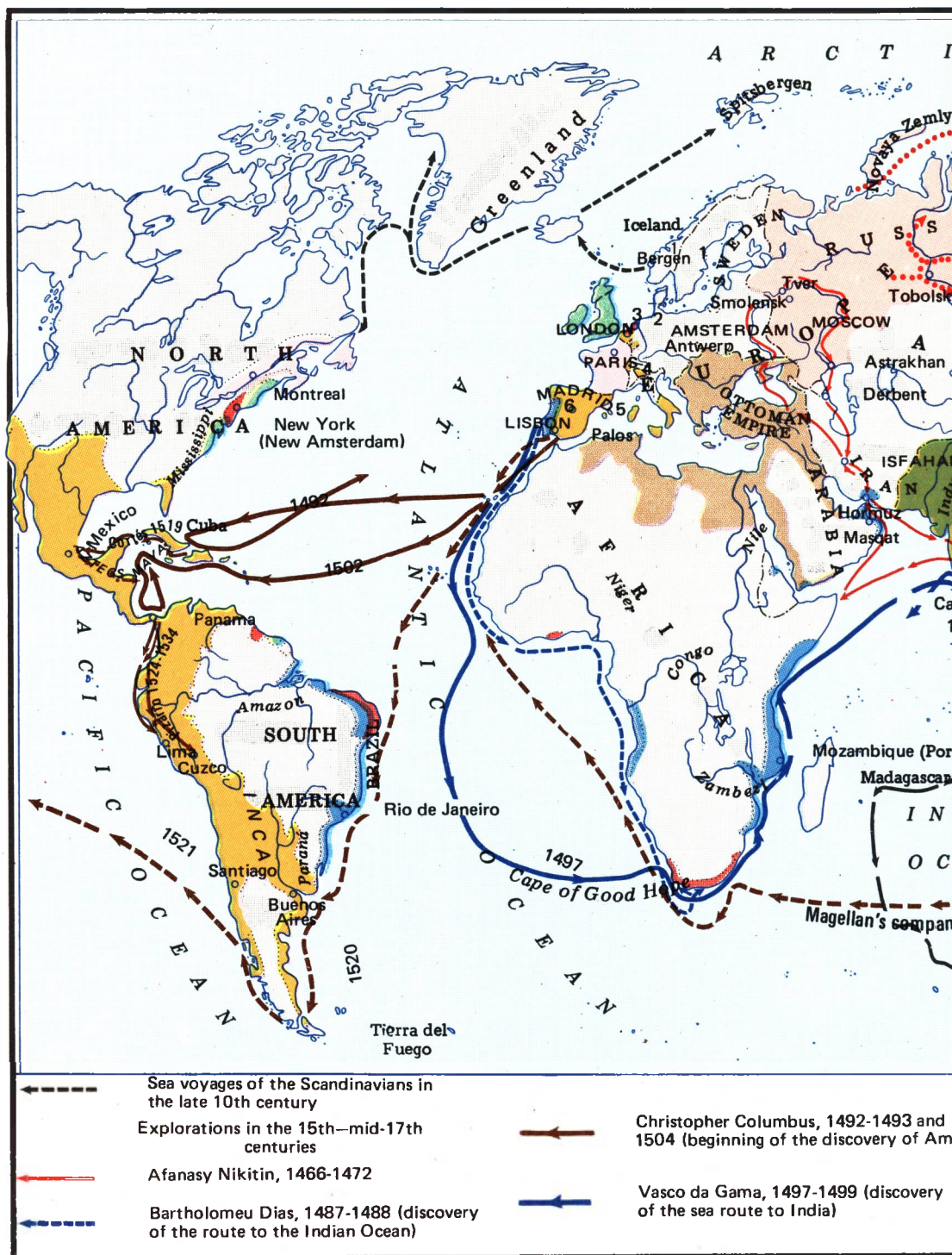
350 0 350 700 km



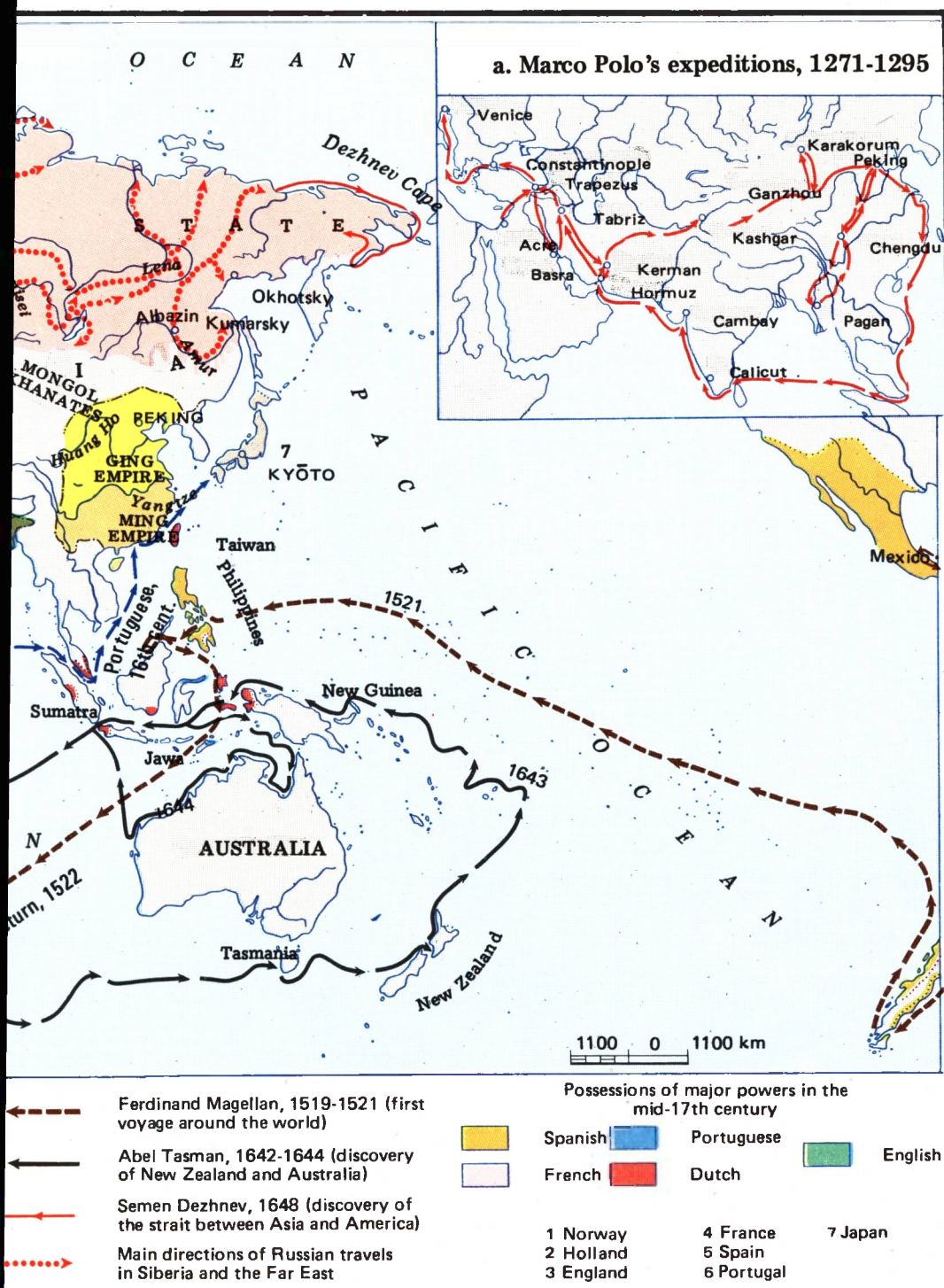
11. THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE 14TH-17TH CENTURIES







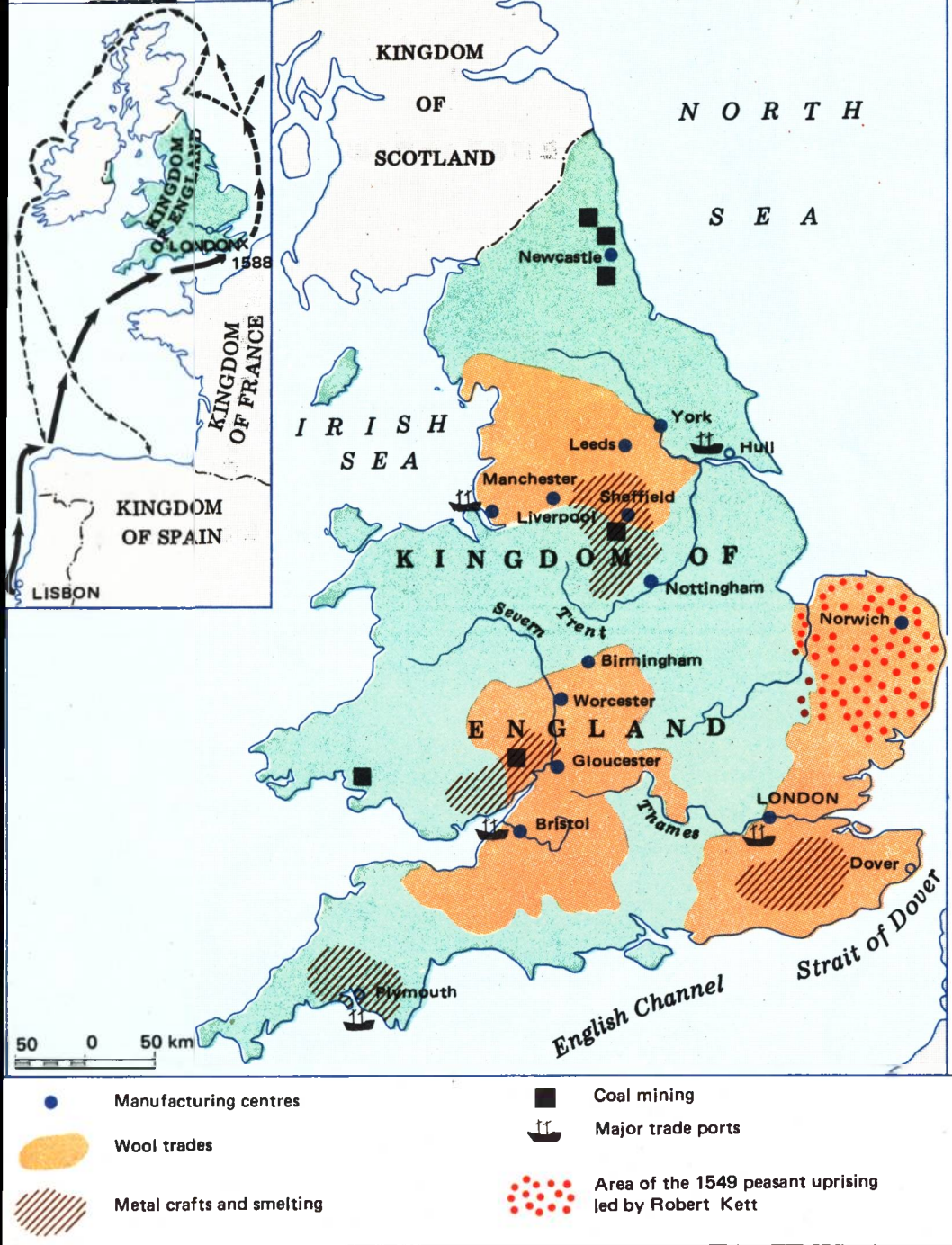
13. THE GEOGRAPHIC DISCOVERIES. COLONIAL AGE



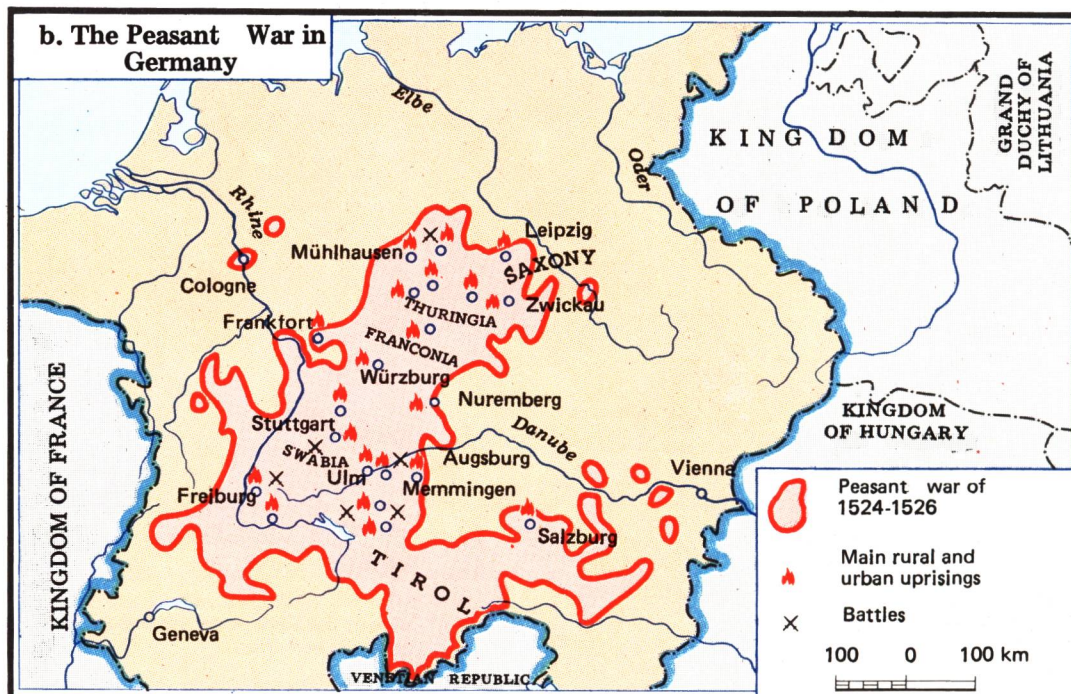


14. EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION IN THE 12TH-16TH CENTURIES

a. Route of the Spanish Armada



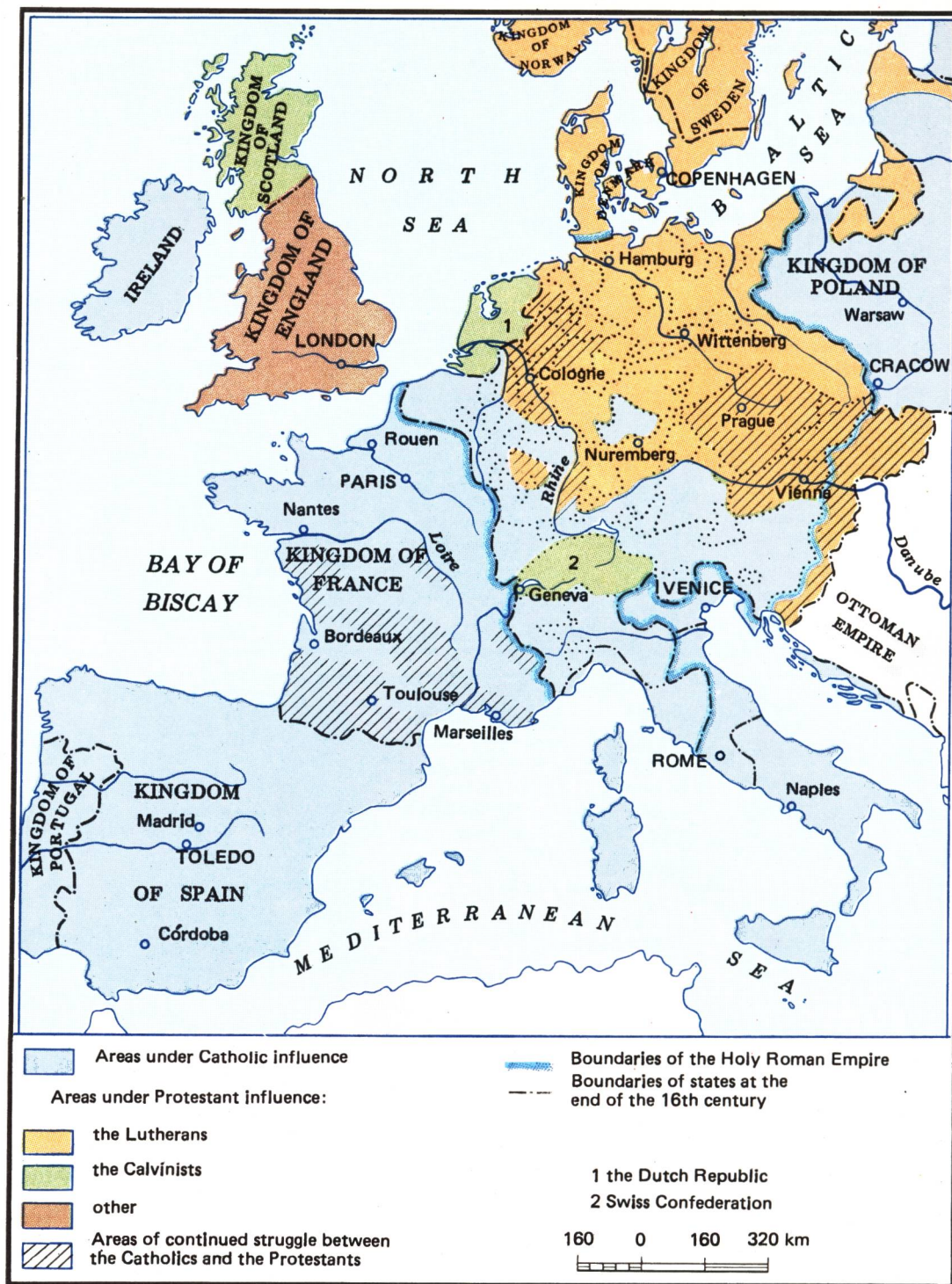
15. THE BEGINNING OF CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND IN THE 16TH CENTURY



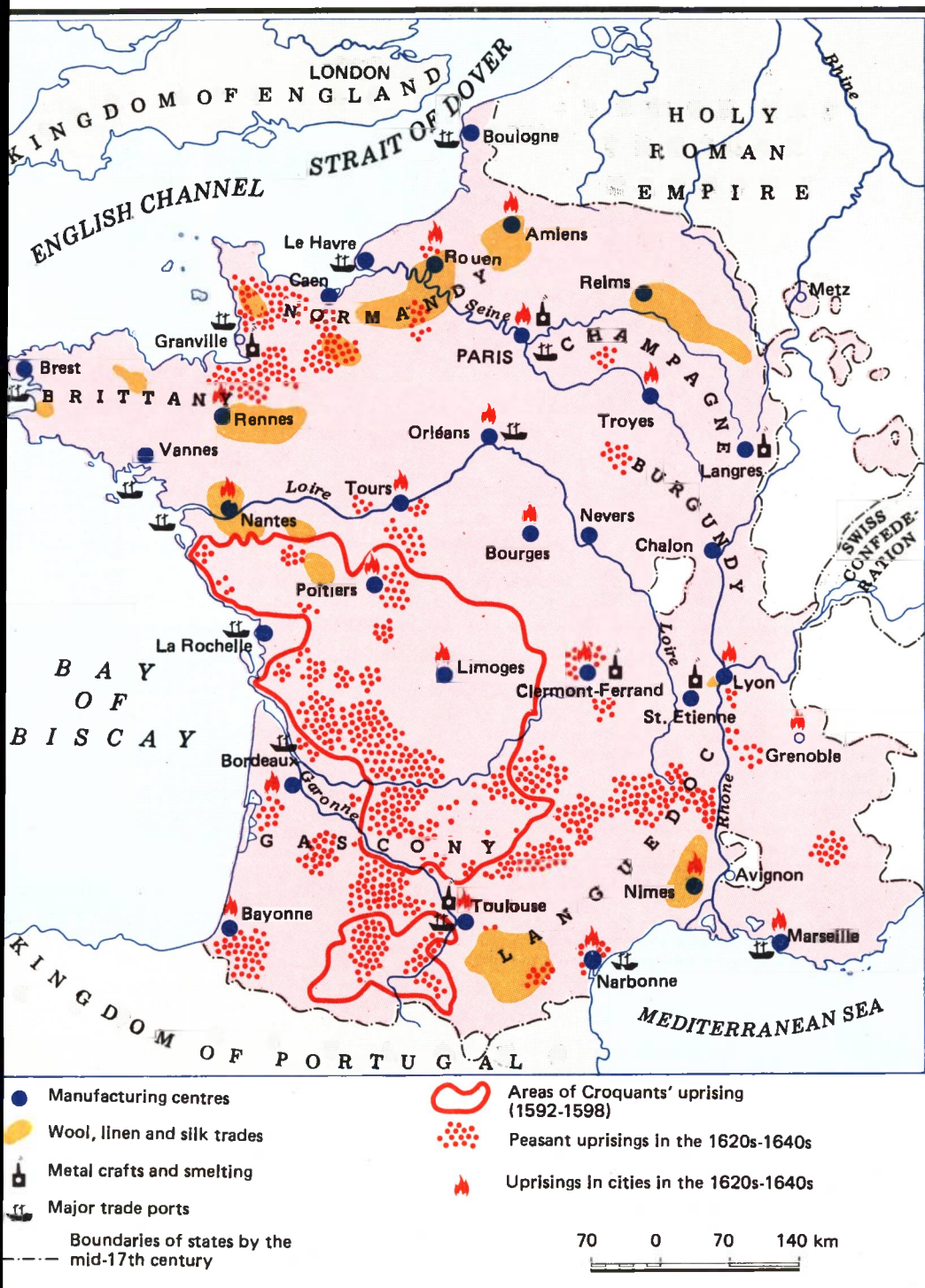
16. GERMANY IN THE PERIOD OF REFORMATION AND THE PEASANT WAR



17. THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION IN THE NETHERLANDS IN THE 16TH CENTURY



18. THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE IN THE 16TH CENTURY



19. FRANCE IN THE 16TH-FIRST HALF OF THE 17TH CENTURIES

20. TERRITORIES OF FEUDAL STATES AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES



LIST OF MAPS

1. The Roman Empire and the incursions of Germanic and Slavic tribes in the 4th-7th centuries
2. Formation and disintegration of the Carolingian Empire
 - a. Formation of the Frankish Kingdom
 - b. Frankish conquests in the late 8th and early 9th centuries
 - c. Division of the Carolingian Empire
3. Byzantine Empire and the Slavs in the 6th-11th centuries
 - a. Three branches of the Slavs
 - b. Bulgarian Kingdom in the 7th-10th centuries
 - c. Byzantine Empire and Slavic states in the 11th century
 - d. Constantinople
4. Byzantine Empire from the mid-6th century to the mid-11th century
5. The Arab Caliphate and its disintegration
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16. Germany in the period of Reformation and the Peasant War
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17. The bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands in the 16th century
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20. Territories of feudal states at the end of the Middle Ages

of his wife and son. He produced about a hundred self-portraits—more than any other painter. Depicting himself and people close to him he conveyed the unlimited diversity of man's features.

He attached great importance to veracity in art, and for this reason had to turn down orders from many rich customers who tried to impose their tastes on him. The time came when there were few orders; the people who were close to him died, and his property and art collections were sold to settle his debts. The artist was forced to give up his studio and find dwellings in a poor quarter. But misfortunes were powerless to break his will: living in poverty, Rembrandt created his best works.

In those years, he mostly painted the portraits of old people whose faces, bearing traces of anxiety and meditation, reflected their whole life.

Rembrandt's greatest achievement was his daring treatment of light and shade. He used light to draw attention to the most important parts of the painting and to reveal its meaning: shafts of light illuminate the face shown against a dark background which exposes the model's inner world. Rembrandt painted one of his best pictures, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, not long before his death. The painting evokes love for mankind, faith in man and in his ability to repent and become better.

Rich Dutchmen failed to appreciate Rembrandt's genius. He died in poverty and was buried in a poor men's cemetery with public funds. Nowadays, not only Holland but the whole of mankind is proud to have produced such a man.

3. *Diego Velazquez*. Towards the end of the 16th century and for a hundred years to come, art in Spain flourished. This time has been called the golden age of Spanish culture. During that period, the country produced many outstanding writers and artists.

Unlike in bourgeois Holland, works of art in feudal Spain were still produced mostly for the church, the king and the upper nobility. This is why paintings concerning religious subjects and grand portraits of aristocrats were predominant in Spanish art. Still, some works also depicted the life of the common people.

The most famous Spanish artist was *Diego Velazquez* (1599-1660). As a young man, he enjoyed painting scenes from everyday life. Later, having come to Madrid, he became a court painter and continued thus for 40 years.



Velazquez. *Self-portrait*



The Spinners. By Velázquez



Man Selling Water in Seville. By Velázquez

Painting grand portraits of the king, his family and high-born noblemen, Velazquez never flattered his models. He showed them as they were, mercilessly exposing their character. He did not do it on purpose—it was just that he was incapable of lying by embellishing the truth. His paintings show the king as a weak-willed, insignificant person. Still, the king and the nobility were pleased with their portraits which were excellent likenesses.

Velazquez was one of the first European artists to depict the labour of common people in his painting *The Spinners* which he created late in life.

The works of Velazquez contain all the best features of Spanish painting. The inscription on his tombstone says: "To the Painter of Truth".

- ? 1. What caused the flourishing of art in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain? 2. What can you say about the portrait of a young man painted by Dürer? What mood of his contemporaries did Dürer convey in his engraving *Four Horsemen*? 3. What feelings does Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son* evoke in the viewer? How are the figures arranged, and which details are emphasised by the artist? Why is Rembrandt considered a master of portrait painting? 4. What are the most outstanding features of the work of Velazquez? 5. Consider the new features introduced by the great 17th-century artists into painting.

§ 61. The Great Writers of Western Europe

Renaissance culture developed not only in Italy but in other countries as well. Writers within the humanistic tradition sharply criticised the feudal system and the Catholic Church. The most progressive realised that capitalism would make the life of the working people very hard, and dreamed of establishing a better, just system.

1. *Thomas More*. The English writer *Thomas More* (1478-1535) was a well-educated man who had a good command of the classical languages. Following in his father's footsteps, he became a lawyer; kind and sympathetic towards other people, he always defended paupers.

In 1516, Thomas More published *Utopia*, a book which condemned the enclosures and cruel laws against the poor. More considered private property the cause of all the misfortunes and suffering of the people. The conclusion he arrived at, quite bold for his time, was that wherever private property



Thomas More. By Hans Holbein the Younger



Cover illustration to *Utopia* printed in Basle in 1518. Engraving

existed, and wherever everything was measured by the yardstick of money, a just and successful development of state affairs was hardly possible. He called the government a conspiracy of the rich who pursued their own interests.

Thomas More described an imaginary happy country situated on a far-off island called *Utopia* (meaning "no place", "nowhere"), its beautiful cities and fertile fields, its extraordinary laws and customs. *Utopia* had no exploitation of man by man, and the people were not divided into categories of rich and poor. All inhabitants of the island were obliged to work: they were engaged in the crafts and took turns every two years working the land.

The citizens of the country only worked for 6 hours a day, but they had more than enough of produce as there were no idle or lazy people. They received everything they needed free from community warehouses. They had meals together in large rooms in beautiful palaces. In their leisure time, they studied the sciences, pursued the arts or participated in sports.

The doors of their houses always stood open, for there were no thieves. To prevent people from becoming greedy, they exchanged their houses and belongings with one another every ten years. They despised money, and used precious stones as children's toys, and gold to make chains for criminals.

The citizens of *Utopia* respected other peoples. They waged wars only to defend their country or to help their friends.

Thomas More was the first to describe a just social system of the future, but he had no idea how people could create such a system. In his time such dreams were impossible to realise. That is why after Thomas More the word *utopia* came to mean an unrealisable dream, a fantasy which had no foundation in reality.



François Rabelais.
16th-century en-
graving

2. *François Rabelais*. Both children and adults enjoy *Gargantua and Pantagruel* written by the French author *François Rabelais* (1494-1553). Presented as a fairy tale and based on old folk legends, the book ridicules the feudal system with its customs and traditions.

Rabelais knew very well how people in France lived. Sent by his parents to a monastery, he soon left it. Rabelais travelled a great deal, visiting Italy more than once. He was a well-educated man, a writer, an expert in the classical languages, a physician and a teacher.

In his works, Rabelais sharply criticised the destructive feudal wars. Rabelais satirised the king bent on conquests who shed the blood of his subjects for the sake of a mad idea—to establish his rule over the whole world.



Illustration to *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Engraving by Gustave Doré

Rabelais boldly attacked the Pope and the Catholic Church. His novel describes a country called Popemania inhabited by devout Catholics. The Popemansians were prepared to annihilate everyone who did not share their views; they destroyed the island of the Popefigs because its inhabitants had made the sign of the fig in front of the portrait of the Pope. The reader had no difficulty recognising the allusion to the struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants.

The Catholic Church persecuted the daring writer. His books were banned and he was threatened with arrest and even burning at the stake. Though his friends and patrons deserted him, Rabelais retained his beliefs to the end of his life.

3. *William Shakespeare*. The favourite art of the English people in the late 16th century was the theatre. London had up to ten repertory theatres. Plays attracted masses of common people. With the greatest attention, in total silence, the spectators watched the performances. Queen Elizabeth herself attended theatres – masked.

All the theatres were open-air. Rows of benches for the rich townspeople and boxes for the nobility were built along a high wall. The stage was separated from the house by a curtain. There was no scenery. Instead, plaques saying “a forest”, “a castle”, etc., were displayed. The performances were held in daylight.

Renaissance theatre is closely linked with the name of the great writer *William Shakespeare* (1564-1616). His father used to be a well-off townsman but lost his money, and from the age of 16, Shakespeare earned his own living. He became an actor and later a co-owner of The Globe theatre in London. Shakespeare wrote 37 plays, tragedies, comedies and historical dramas.

Shakespeare realised that the old feudal world was nearing its end. But he could not accept the new world of the bourgeoisie with its lust for money and thirst for profits.

Shakespeare penetrated deeper into the inner world of man than any of his contemporaries. Hamlet, the hero of one of his tragedies, exclaims: “What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a God! the beauty of the world!”

In his tragedies *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare described the collapse of people’s dreams of goodness and beauty. His most attractive, noble and brave characters died in the unequal struggle against the evil reigning



William Shakespeare. Portrait by a 17th-century artist



English theatre of the time of Shakespeare. 17th-century drawing. The building had no roof, performances took place in daylight.

in the world. The young Romeo and Juliet loved each other deeply, but a long-standing feud between their families stood in the way of their love. The heroes died but did not betray each other.

The great writer created true-to-life characters and had them speak the language spoken by the common people. Karl Marx considered Shakespeare one of the "greatest geniuses ever produced by mankind".

4. *Cervantes*. The great Spanish writer and humanist, *Miguel de Cervantes* (1547-1616), led a life full of hardships. He was born into the family of an impoverished nobleman. Having graduated from the university, he entered military service. In a sea battle with the Turks he was severely wounded. The ship which was bringing Cervantes back home was captured by pirates and ended up in Algeria. The future writer spent five years in captivity; he tried to escape a number of times but failed. At the cost of complete financial ruin, his family managed to collect enough money to ransom him. To earn his living, he had to become a tax-collector. The job was odious to Cervantes, but it gave him a good chance to see how the common people lived.

Cervantes's main work, which has brought him world fame, is the novel *Don Quixote*. The principal character of the book is an impoverished nobleman who has read too many romances. He embarks on a journey to protect all the mistreated and oppressed. His goal is to make people better and to establish justice all over the world straight away. The gawky, tall and thin Don Quixote is accompanied everywhere by his faithful sword-bearer Sancho Panza, a sturdily-built, stocky man. But the time of knight-errants is over: Don Quixote's armour is no more than some rusty bits and pieces of his ancestors' weaponry,



Miguel de Cervantes.
Monument in Seville



Don Quixote and
Sancho Panza.
Monument in Seville

Don Quixote and
Sancho Panza. En-
graving illustrating an
early edition of the
novel (17th century)

A scene from *Don
Quixote*. Engraving
by Gustave Doré



his battle steed a pitiful jade, and his sword-bearer a cunning peasant.

The two main characters of the novel are not complete opposites; in many ways they are similar—kind, active and sympathetic towards other people. Don Quixote managed to lure Sancho Panza to make the journey by promising him easy money and a governor's post. But, wishing to serve the people, Don Quixote only does them harm in his delusion. He charges forward with his lance directed against windmills which he takes for giants; he sets convicts free thinking they are captured knights; an inn seems a castle to him, and a herd of sheep—an enemy army.

Don Quixote is cursed and beaten, he is mocked and ridiculed, but still he loves people. Under his influence, Sancho Panza changes too. When a rich nobleman pretends that he appoints Panza governor of an island, the illiterate peasant displays wisdom, a sense of justice and generosity in administering justice.

This novel, which urges the people to raise their voices against evil and injustice, has long been a favourite in many countries.

- ?
- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. In your opinion, why could the outlook of Thomas More evolve only in England, and not earlier than the 16th century? How did Thomas More picture a just future system? | 2. What evils of the feudal system are castigated in Rabelais's work? | 3. What aspects of his time did Shakespeare criticise? What sort of people were the heroes of his plays? | 4. Why does Don Quixote, a ridiculous dreamer, remain dear to us even today? How are the two main characters of Cervantes's novel connected? |
| 5. How did Gustave Doré, an artist who illustrated books by Rabelais and Cervantes, reflect the features of their characters? | | | |
| 6. What features of Renaissance culture were present in the work of the great writers of the 16th-early 17th centuries? | | | |

§ 62. The Struggle Between Science and the Church

1. *Scientific Advances.* Following in the steps of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, seafarers continued to roam the vast expanses of the oceans. In the early 17th century, another continent was discovered—*Australia*. Russian hunters and Cossaks penetrated into the unexplored Asian north and reached the Pacific Ocean coast. The courageous travellers had explored the

greater part of land, seas and oceans. *Geography* was making rapid progress.

To be able to determine the location of the ship in open sea, it was necessary to have precise knowledge of the movement of the planets and stars. Navigation called for more accurate knowledge of *astronomy*.

Most medieval views on the structure of the Universe were incorrect. It was thought that the immovable Earth rested in the centre of the Universe. The clergy backed this erroneous theory since it did not contradict the idea that God had created the Earth and the people on it, and made the Sun and the planets revolve around it.

2. *Nicolaus Copernicus*. A crippling blow to the church doctrine of the Universe was dealt by the great Polish scientist *Nicolaus Copernicus* (1473-1543).

For over 30 years, Copernicus observed the heavenly bodies with the help of simple instruments. Having made complicated calculations, he arrived at the conclusion that the Earth revolved around the Sun and at the same time around its axis. This meant that the Earth was only one of the planets revolving around the Sun.

For a long time, Copernicus kept his discoveries secret: the new teaching could have brought upon him not only persecution by the church but general ridicule and disapproval. At that time, the whole world believed that the Sun revolved around the Earth, and only Copernicus was convinced that what the eye saw went against the truth.

In 1543, he decided to publish his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies). Copernicus was on his deathbed when his friends put the first copy of his book into his hand.

Copernicus' discovery brought about a revolution in science. The notion that God had created the Earth and the first people collapsed. Copernicus' teaching undermined the prestige of religion.

3. *Giordano Bruno*. The Italian thinker *Giordano Bruno*, a true hero and a staunch champion of science, was born in 1548. As a teenager, he was sent to a monastery. Even as a child, he thirsted for knowledge and devoted himself not to prayer but to scientific studies. Keeping it a secret from the monastery authorities, Bruno read Copernicus' book and realised that the view of the world advocated by the church was ridiculous and false. Informers made his opinions known to the authorities. Shedding the monk's robes, Bruno fled from the monastery.



Nicolaus Copernicus. Portrait, 16th century

Afterwards, his fascinating life was filled with wandering and troubles. The hand of the clergy reached him everywhere, interfering with his work. Over a period of 16 years, he lived in many countries of Europe, including France, England, Germany, and Bohemia. Bruno was a loquacious speaker and a talented writer and poet.

Developing Copernicus' doctrine, he insisted that the Universe had no end and that it was infinite. Neither the Earth nor the Sun were its centre. The Universe comprised an incalculable number of stars; each of them was a sun around which other planets revolved. This bold idea has now been confirmed by science.

Bruno missed his native country very much, and decided to return there. In Italy, he was betrayed and grabbed by the Inquisition. He spent nearly eight years in horrible prisons. The Inquisition's attempts to make him recant, and even torture were powerless to make him renounce his views. A clerical court sentenced him to burning at the stake.

On February 16, 1600, Giordano Bruno was executed. On the spot of his execution, in the Square of Flowers in Rome, a monument to him has been erected with the inscription: "He raised his voice for the freedom of thought for all peoples, and paid for this freedom with his life."

The years that followed immediately after Giordano Bruno's death witnessed scientific discoveries that proved that the idea for which the courageous scholar had given his life was correct.

4. *Galileo*. Venice was in a turmoil. A huge crowd assembled in front of the main city cathedral. Everyone wanted to take a look through the optic tube and see, quite clearly, the ships on the sea and many other things which were very far away. The magic tube had been placed on the belfry of the cathedral by the scholar *Galileo* (1564-1642).

Galileo was the first scientist to observe the sky through a telescope. With its help, he could magnify visible objects thirty times. Galileo saw that there were a far greater number of stars than could be seen with the naked eye. It turned out that the Moon, just like the Earth, had mountains, that the planet Jupiter was surrounded by satellites, and that the Sun had spots. Galileo made many other discoveries with the help of his wonderful telescope. All of them proved that the doctrine of Copernicus and Giordano Bruno was correct.

The church had banned Copernicus' book. As if in response, Galileo published a scientific work which defended the conclusions of the Polish scholar. Galileo's discoveries enraged the



Galileo. Engraving, 17th century

clergy. The Pope summoned him to Rome for a court hearing. The 70-year-old scientist had to face the Inquisition. The interrogation lasted for five months. Threatening to use torture, the inquisitors forced the exhausted old man to recant. Wearing the clothes of a penitent sinner, he had to kneel and repeat after the judge the humiliating words of his "repentance".

A beautiful legend about Galileo's recantation, which appeared later, has him rising to his feet after stating that he did not believe in the movement of the Earth, and asserting: "*E pur si muove*" (But it does move). This legend conveys the conviction that man's free thought cannot be suppressed.

Galileo remained a captive of the Inquisition until the very end of his life. He was put under surveillance and not allowed to publish books. Still, he continued to believe that the new views about the Universe were correct.

Thus, science rebelled against religion and broke free from its clutches. It now had boundless opportunities for the study and analysis of the world.

- ? 1. Why did the new view of the world evolve as late as in the 16th century? 2. What discovery was made by Copernicus? What was the scientific contribution of Giordano Bruno? How did Galileo confirm and develop the doctrine of Copernicus and Bruno?

CONCLUSION TO PART THREE

1. *Why did the feudal system begin to disintegrate and capitalist production begin to emerge?*

The final, third period in the history of the Middle Ages lasted from the late 15th to the mid-17th century. It is called the *late Middle Ages*. This was a time when the feudal system was disintegrating and capitalist production was emerging in the countries of Western Europe.

The technical discoveries and inventions made in the 15th-16th centuries, and more advanced division of labour led to the appearance of manufactories. These enterprises were large by the standards of that time. The division of labour at the manufactories resulted in greater labour productivity.

As manufactories became larger and more numerous, new classes—the bourgeoisie and hired workers—were formed. In England, France, the Netherlands and some other European countries, capitalist relations were taking shape; the bourgeoisie,

What promoted the emergence of capitalist production?

What classes were formed with the appearance of manufactories?

Which classes and groups of the population evolved into hired workers?

which had the money and owned enterprises and commodities, exploited hired workers.

In some countries, peasants were driven off their land, in others they grew poorer and were finally ruined. The impoverished peasants, craftsmen, apprentices and the town poor joined the ranks of hired workers.

The geographical discoveries and colonisation speeded up the accumulation of wealth by merchants, bankers and owners of enterprises. European conquerors robbed and enslaved the indigenous inhabitants of America, Africa and Asia. Piracy and slave trade became widespread. The bourgeoisie amassed its riches at the expense of the suffering and death of millions of people.

The feudal class did its best to keep land and power in its hands. To succeed, it helped consolidate the centralised feudal state: in the late Middle Ages, absolute monarchies were firmly established in a number of European countries.

The emergence of the bourgeoisie occurred together with the formation of a new, humanistic culture. The old views on the structure of the world upheld by religion received a staggering blow. In the course of its advancement, science had to overcome the stubborn opposition of religion.

2. Why was a revolutionary overthrow of the feudal system inevitable?

The development of capitalist production and trade was hampered by the feudal order under which land belonged to the feudal lords. Absolute monarchy was the dominant state system, and the church was very influential. Burdened by high taxes and overwhelmed by debts, the peasants had no opportunity to improve farming methods and bought few goods produced by manufactories. Contradictions between the developing capitalist relations in production and the feudal customs and laws led to a more acute class struggle.

A powerful wave of popular movements swept over Europe. The Reformation, a movement of the bourgeoisie and the masses against the sway of the church, gained strength. The Peasant War in Germany was the first attempt to abolish the feudal system through revolution. It failed because capitalist relations in Germany were insufficiently developed, while the bourgeoisie was neither numerous nor strong.

In the Netherlands, where the struggle of the popular masses was headed by the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois revolution was successful. It cleared the way for the development of capitalist production and replaced oppression by the feudal nobility with

Which groups of the population evolved into the bourgeoisie? How did the bourgeoisie amass its wealth?

How did the structure of the feudal state change?

What caused these changes? What promoted the flourishing of culture in the 15th-first half of the 17th centuries? What impeded further development of capitalist production and trade?

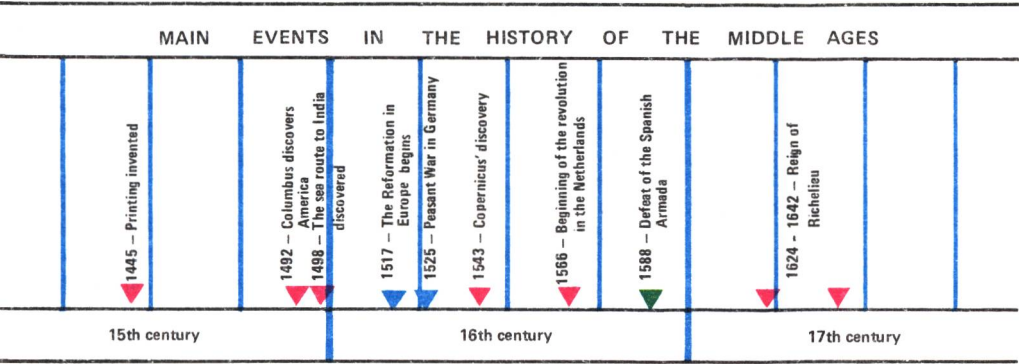
Why did the class struggle become more acute?

How was the intensification of the class struggle manifested? Why was the church the primary target of this struggle?

Where did the first, successful bourgeois revolution take place? What consequences did it have? Why was a revolution necessary to abolish the feudal system?

oppression by the bourgeoisie.

The class of feudal lords fought fiercely for the preservation of its property and power. The feudal order could be abolished only by force. This was why a bourgeois revolution was required to accomplish a transition from the feudal system to the more advanced (for that time) capitalist system.



CHECK HOW WELL YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Three Periods in the History of the Middle Ages

Periods	Economic development	The classes	The class struggle	Changes in the structure of the state	The development of culture
I. The establishment of the feudal system. 5th-10th centuries	Low level of agricultural technology, its slow development. Pre-dominance of subsistence economies.	Formation of two main classes: feudal lords and dependent peasants. Feudal exploitation (corvée, rent in kind).	The peasants' struggle against enslavement and oppression by feudal lords.	Formation of early feudal states. Feudal fragmentation.	Cultural decline in Western Europe after the German conquests. The complete domination of the church over culture. A higher cultural standard in the East.

Periods	Economic development	The classes	The class struggle	Changes in the structure of the state	The development of culture
II. The development of the feudal system. 11th-late 15th centuries	Separation of the crafts from agriculture. Emergence and growth of towns. Increased division of labour. Exchange develops between the town and the country and among regions and countries.	Methods of exploitation change (money rent). Peasants begin to win freedom from personal bondage in a number of countries in Western Europe. Emergence of the estates.	The struggle of peasants against greater feudal oppression. Powerful peasant uprisings and wars.	Formation in some countries of centralised states and consolidation of the monarchy. Limited monarchy.	The development of feudal culture: universities, the advance of art (the Romanesque and Gothic styles). The emergence of urban culture; weakened influence of the church on culture; the invention of printing.
III. The feudal system begins to disintegrate. Capitalist relations emerge. Late 15th-mid 17th centuries.	Technical discoveries and inventions. The emergence of manufactories. Colonisation and development of world trade.	Formation of new classes – the bourgeoisie and hired workers. Capitalist exploitation begins. Some peasants are ruined.	The Reformation – movement of bourgeoisie and common people against the feudal system and the Catholic Church. The bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands.	Further development of centralised states. Absolute monarchy.	Renaissance culture: the flourishing of art, a drastic change in the views on the structure of the Universe. The struggle between science and religion.

THE PLACE OF THE MIDDLE AGES IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND

As society develops, one social system is bound to be replaced by another: after the primitive communal system, the slave-owning and later the feudal system were established. With each new system, the economy and culture reached a higher level of development as compared to the preceding systems.

Under the feudal system, the *division of labour* between the town and the countryside, between individual crafts, between the countries' regions and within capitalist enterprises, increased. Each new stage in the division of labour led to an increase in labour productivity.

In the Middle Ages, the area of cultivated land became larger. *Agricultural implements* were improved; people began to use ploughs, harrows, water wheels and wind mills. Land cultivation progressed, too, especially when artificial fertilizers came into use. *New crops* became widespread: rice, cotton, sugar cane, tea, coffee, lemons and oranges came from the East, and potatoes, corn, tomatoes and cocoa—from America.

Many of the now existing *towns and cities* were founded in the Middle Ages. This gave a powerful impetus to the development of the economy and culture.

Many new *household objects* also appeared in the Middle Ages: china, mirrors, forks, soap. The first *clocks* were installed on town-hall towers at that time. In some jobs, manual labour was now done by the *water engine*. *Blast furnaces* appeared, and metal was processed with the help of drilling machines, lathes and grinding machines. *Treadle spinning-wheels* and horizontal *looms* were introduced in cloth-making. The invention of *gunpowder* and *firearms* had a decisive effect on the development of warfare.

Seafarers began to use the *compass* and other *navigation instruments*; ships became stronger and faster. Courageous European travellers explored a large part of dry land, seas and oceans, discovered *new continents*—America and Australia—sailed around the southern extremity of Africa, and explored the northeastern part of Asia. It was proved that the *Earth was round*.

Many things invented in the Middle Ages have since become part of man's life. The *printed book*—the source of our knowledge—was introduced in the Middle Ages. People began to read *newspapers*. Higher educational establishments—*universities*—were founded.

As the economy advanced and more people received an education, *scientific* knowledge also made progress. The *thermometer*, *barometer*, *telescope* and *microscope* were invented. Now, the scholars were able not only to observe the stars but also to watch the life of minute living beings and examine the structure of animals and plants.

Art also made tremendous progress, especially in the period of the Renaissance. *Architects* built magnificent structures; houses, fortresses and cathedrals constructed many centuries ago

remain architectural wonders. Sculptors and painters portrayed life with greater accuracy.

Many *states* which exist now were formed in the Middle Ages: England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland and many others. The *languages* of many peoples were developed, including English, French and Italian; extensive literature in these languages was written.

In the Middle Ages, mankind made a big step forward in economic and cultural development as compared with ancient Greece and Rome.

- ? 1. What period is covered by the Middle Ages? What system existed at that time? Give a definition of this system. Which three periods are distinguished in the history of the Middle Ages? 2. Examine the table "Three Periods in the History of the Middle Ages". Tell (a) how the economy changed over these three periods; (b) how the position of the classes changed, and what caused these changes; (c) what were the goals of the people's struggle during each of the periods; (d) how the state system changed during the Middle Ages and what caused the changes. 3. What achievements of medieval science and technology are still used by mankind? 4. What facts demonstrate that the common people were the main force behind economic and cultural development in the Middle Ages? 5. Prove that the feudal system was a higher stage than the slave-owning system. Why was the feudal system forced to give way to the capitalist system? 6. Check whether you can remember the chronological dates printed inside the covers of the textbook.

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History of the Middle Ages

In 1978, *History of the Middle Ages* was awarded the State Prize of the USSR.

It is a sequel to *History of the Ancient World* brought out by Progress Publishers in English, but it can easily be used independently.

The Middle Ages stretch from the 5th to the mid-17th century, covering twelve centuries of world history. That was the time of the establishment and development of feudal and the emergence of capitalist relations.

The book deals with the principal events in the history of Western and Central European states, India, China, and some other countries. It also gives a good idea of the tremendous contribution to world culture made by mankind in the Middle Ages.

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